

ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS



SPECIAL 17TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS

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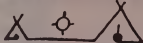
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Treaty Six First Nations 125th Year Commemoration

"...for as long as the sun shines, the rivers
flow and the grass grows."
by L. R. Bull

The year 2001 marks the 125th anniversary of the signing of Treaty No. 6 between First Nations of the Cree, Nakota and Saulteaux and the British Crown. On August 23 and 28, 1876 at Fort Carlton and September 9, 1876 at Fort Pitt, Chiefs and Headmen from the various Nations of their territories and from what would later become the prairie provinces, concluded Articles of Treaty Six with Queen Victoria's commissioners.

After much deliberation and dialogue amongst the First Peoples, the Queen's representative, Alexander Morris and the signatories endorsed Treaty No. 6 with the mark of an "X". It was understood by the First Nations that the treaty-making process was a sacred and binding transaction with rights and obligations to be upheld by both parties who were to benefit by the legal and binding treaty "for as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow and the grass grows."

The signing of Treaty No. 6 formalized the nation-to-nation relationship that existed by virtue of a foreign/European nation approaching and negotiating with the First Nations in order to open the west for European settlement and share Indigenous territories with the foreigners. In exchange, First Nations Peoples rights contained within the treaty would ensure survival for their future generations, amongst other rights.

The Original Peoples of the land (Turtle Island) now called Kanata have made the largest contribution to the world and that was the sharing of their lands and resources. Yet, they have not been recognized nor acknowledged, nor has there been any critical reflection of the rights and responsibilities accrued by the dominant society for their participation and obligation of the treaty which their ancestors endorsed, and who now inhabit and benefit from Indigenous lands and resources. Upon reflecting on the past 125 years since the official signing of Treaty No. 6, First Nations' Peoples' observations indicate that somewhere along the way, the nation-to-nation relationship changed power; today they realize that it has been an introduction of a modernization paradigm to be implemented on the First Peoples. Despite the fact that First Peoples continue to maintain the Spirit and Intent of the Treaty-making Process, statistics today indicate that they suffer the injustices of colonization, of being marginalized peoples within their home-lands, with legislation and policies being dictated to them in a country which they willingly shared with visitors who appropriated their lands, resources and ideologies.

It is with this critical and historical reflection that the commemoration will take place:

- To honour the sacredness and the true Spirit and Intent of the signing of Treaty No. 6;
- To honour the memory of our Forefathers and Signatories of Treaty No. 6;



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- To instill Indigenous pride and knowledge to the youth;
 - To educate the public of a First Nations' perspective;
 - To reflect upon the historical significance and impact of the treaty-making process, namely Treaty No. 6;
 - To create public awareness that has for too long ignored the greatest contribution/s made by the First Peoples;
 - To educate the dominant society of their obligation to the treaties;
 - To conscientize and encourage Indigenous Peoples and their rightful place in society.
- It is with these reflections that the Chiefs and First Nations' Members of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations will commemorate the anniversary of the signing of Treaty No. 6 and gather at the sacred grounds at Fort Pitt, Saskatchewan on September 5 to 9, 2001.

The First Nations commemorate the anniversary of the signing of Treaty No. 6 as a Reaffirmation of their sovereignty based on a nation-to-nation status, "...for as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow and the grass grows."

Ms. L. R. Bull, M.Ed., is an environmental and cultural advisor with the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations.

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Halfway River First Nation prevents access to pipeline to protect sacred hunting areas

Earlier this month, Chief Bernie Metechah of the Halfway River First Nation ordered that access be prevented along the North Road, adjacent to the main hunting camp that lies directly in the path of the proposed Petro Canada pipeline.

The chief made this serious decision with the consent of the 200-member Halfway Community. The blockade located an hour and a half north of Fort St. John, B.C. is being manned by 55 people, and all oil industry personnel are being turned away although people are permitted to leave the area. The actual construction of the pipeline is scheduled to begin next month.

For years, the Halfway River First Nation has been frustrated by attempts to negotiate with government and industry regarding exploding resource developments on their traditional lands. Hundreds of letters have been sent and many meetings have been attended. To date, "they have been a waste of time - nothing has come out of these actions," he explains.

Chief Metechah states: "Our Treaty 8, signed in 1899, constitutionally guarantees us the right to enjoy our traditional rights, without interference by resource developers authorized by the Province of British Columbia. We had hoped that the province and resource companies would have learned a lesson from our well-known legal challenge that led to the successful Halfway Court Decision against the province. We are now ready to prove our rights again by all available means..." As a community meeting prior to the blockade, the Halfway people expressed concern that the traditional lands, especially the hunting grounds along North Road were "dying a death of a thousand cuts," with the ongoing clearance of the Petro Canada pipeline work - combined with the 30 other companies wanting pieces of Halfway traditional lands for natural gas developments. They felt that the immediate concern is the spectre of the 23 km long proposed Petro Canada pipeline poised to destroy 4 out of 7 hunting camps along the North Road that have been continuously used for generations.

If built, Elders fear that the Petro Canada pipeline will open up the area with more lateral or "feeder" pipelines, roads and gas wells and establish access for non-Native hunters on ATVs.

From a conservation biology standpoint, the fastest way to destroy trappings, driving away fur-bearing animals and destroying habitats for elk, moose and deer is to fragment the forest environment. Historically that is what oil and gas activities do.

Elder Edward Achla sums up the importance of the North Road hunting areas to the Beaver People of Halfway River First Nation: "This hunting camp is one of our most sacred areas and is dear to our people. It is our 'food basket' for elk, deer and moose."

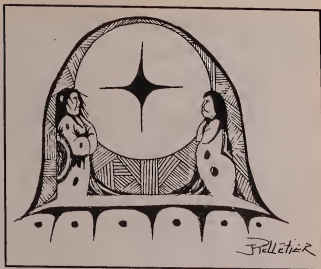
Support for the actions of Halfway is pouring in from First Nations in Alberta and British Columbia. A letter of support from the Cold Lake First Nation pledges strong support and the intervention of a UN team examining conditions and environmental problems in the Cold Lake area.

At a chiefs meeting, at the protest camps, along the North Road, Chief Stewart Phillips, president of the powerful Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, offered the unlimited support of the union, honouring the goals and actions of the Halfway River First Nation... "your struggle is our struggle. We must fight together to enforce our rights and protect our traditional lands for future generations," said Chief Phillips.

In conclusion, the demands of the Halfway River First Nation are as follows:

- A total moratorium on all resource developments on Halfway First Nation's traditional lands, until an independent and comprehensive cumulative environmental impact assessment (EIA) be completed, with First Nations involvement;
- A demand that the federal government live up to its fiduciary responsibility and negotiate the interpretation and implementation of our treaty rights;
- All resource developers immediately agree to negotiate agreements with the First Nation relating to proper consultations, avoidance of interference with treaty rights, mitigation and compensation for damages and guarantees of socioeconomic benefits to the First Nation;
- A stop to the proposed Petro Canada pipeline.

A week ago Gray Jones, campaigner for the Western Canada Wilderness



Committee (WCWC) was invited by Chief Metechah to come to his territory and witness the destruction being wrought by the booming oil and gas industry, and see the total disregard that the industry and government display toward his Nation's plight.

"I hitchhiked a ride with an oil and gas executive who couldn't stop raving about the potential hydrocarbon resources of the area. It's the New Saudi Arabia of Canada," he exclaimed, flushed with excitement. When I got to the traditional hunting camp of the Halfway people alongside a once quiet back road, I found an anxious people. They couldn't find big game to hunt. Along this road there is a constant parade of oil and gas companies' big equipment rumbling by," explained Jones. "Industry is going ahead in total disregard of these people's constitutionally guaranteed rights. They just don't give a dam."

Petrocan is working on constructing a pipeline across the Halfway River Nation's traditional hunting territory. Seismic explorations are going on everywhere. Already negative results are being felt. Chief Bernie Metechah has tried to negotiate with the company and the B.C. government but his efforts have been ignored.

WCWC's Gray Jones, an observer at the site of the confrontation, is worried that the situation could become violent because of the attitude of some of the workers. He is requesting that the B.C. and federal governments immediately address the "misarranging of justice" currently under way.

Halfway River Band members, including Elders and children have vowed not to move until their grievances are addressed.

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AFN and feds to discuss governance work plan

The Assembly of First Nations Chiefs issued an ultimatum to DIAND Minister Robert Nault to stop his recent federal government governance initiative. They encouraged all First Nations to boycott the current consultations. They called for Canada to instead join with First Nations in a process whereby First Nations laws are recognized and which would "honour the true spirit of our inherent Aboriginal title and treaty rights" as outlined in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The ultimatum was issued on the final day of the AFN Assembly held in Halifax last month. The chiefs resolved that the minister would have thirty days to respond, failing which the First Nations would "launch an aggressive plan of action" in opposition to the government initiative.

Within two weeks of hearing the ultimatum Minister Nault met with AFN Chief Matthew Coon Come and Vice Chiefs Satsan Herb George and Perry Bellegarde, to discuss the AFN resolution and the direction provided by the chiefs at the Halifax assembly.

The minister issued a joint statement with the National Chief that there would be a thirty day cooling off period during which the governance process would be paused.

In a letter to all First Nations chiefs, National Chief

Matthew Coon Come stated,

"Whereas previously there did not appear to be any liability, the minister has now committed to an open and respectful process with us. The minister has agreed to stop his consultation process on the First Nations Governance Act for a period of thirty days. This moratorium will provide us with the opportunity to explore what work can be done in accordance with the direction from First Nations.

"We have agreed that officials from our office will meet with officials from INAC over the next ten days to finalize a work plan to address the direction established by resolution of our Assembly. Following the successful development of this work plan, the minister will meet with our executive to discuss the possibility of announcing a new direction and joint process to address First Nations governance.

"As always, we will endeavour to provide all information to First Nations as soon as it becomes available. Once the officials have developed a work plan and once we are satisfied that it addresses the matters raised in the resolution, we must all begin to work together for this to succeed. We look forward to engaging all First Nations to the greatest extent possible in this future activity."

Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of British Columbia Chiefs, is cautious in his appraisal of the recent correspondence between the AFN executive and Ottawa. He reminded Chief Coon Come that a number of chiefs in the Assembly did not want the executive to be "the only ones involved in discussions with the Government of Canada on matters that affect us all."

"We want a representative body involved immediately, not after the fact," stated the UBCIC Chief.

The AFN chiefs attending the Halifax Assembly unanimously rejected Minister Nault's plan to fast track a new Governance Act for the country's First Nations.

"We lived through Oka, we lived through Ipperwash and we lived through Burnt Church. We're not going to go away," promised Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come during the final day of the AFN's July 17-19 Annual Assembly. "We are going to continue to push the government for our issues. They'll have to deal with realities. They'll have to deal with Aboriginal title because it's in the constitution (and) because the courts (have) recognized those rights."

Coon Come predicts that if Ottawa tries to implement the new act without meaningful consultation with Canada's chiefs, and the national body that represents them, roadblocks, sits-ins and other peaceful means of protest could break out across the country. And, he added, should that happen, they will have the full support of the AFN. "I think there are some people that are willing to take drastic measures," he told the Assembly and the media in attendance. "If you've got nothing, you've got nothing to lose. You've got no job, your land is taken away, you've got no future."

The AFN Assembly, which coincided with the popular NEXUS 2001 Conference and Trade Show, saw more than 1,300 delegates, including more than 300 First Nations Chiefs in attendance.

Days before the meeting some chiefs offered their views of Ottawa's intended Governance Act. Calling Nault's plan everything from "misguided" and "un-



workable" to "intolerable" and "nothing more than an elaborate plan to eliminate First Nations unity," the chiefs made it clear that without their input, no cooperation would be forthcoming and that they would do everything in their power to disrupt the process. "We don't want to take an aggressive stand, but we will be heard," cautioned the co-chair of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, Chief Lawrence Paul, as the assembly came to a close. He and the other 300 chiefs in attendance gave Coon Come's Governance Act strategy their full support, voting unanimously to do so.

"We will block the highway from Prince Edward Island to Vancouver," said Chief Paul, of alternative measures that will be taken if a Governance Act is pushed on First Nations. "There is not enough army, there is not enough police to stop 600 First Nations; we can bring Canada to a standstill."

Structural chaos, permanent joblessness, poor housing, extreme poverty and mixed messages from government are all adding to the fires of discontent in First Nations and other Indigenous communities across Canada. Chief Coon Come said First Nations have nothing to lose by standing fast in their determination to be heard in Ottawa. He says Ottawa's next move will determine what comes next. "I think the reaction will depend on the federal government that hasn't listened to First Nations or respected the Supreme Court or constitution recognizing Aboriginal rights and how to implement them" he said. In a statement made to media on Wednesday, July 18, Robert Nault said, "the door is always open to their (AFN) involvement in the First Nations governance initiative."

"I think there may be some light at the end of the tunnel," Chief Coon Come said after meeting with Nault. "There's a willingness to look at our work plan."

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Alberta Native News celebrates its 17th year

No Government Grants.

That, says Edmonton-based *Alberta Native News* publisher Dave Moser, is one of the proudest banners that an independent newspaper can have floating over its masthead.

"The free press has almost gone the way of the wild bison herds that once roamed the expanse of the North American prairies," said Moser, recently interviewed for an article marking the newspaper's 17th year of operation.

The No Government Grants motto has been a mainstay on the masthead of every issue of *Alberta Native News* for a dozen years, but it's been Publisher Moser's motto since Day One.

"Government handouts," reiterated Moser, "have been an enormous problem in this country for decades. Free money breeds dependency and lends itself to low self-esteem. Self-reliance, and that is what we should all be seeking, does not come from welfare, grantsmanship or deficit funding. It comes from hard work. It comes from paying your own way and it comes from responsible spending and responsible management. We're quite proud of our record and our achievements and over the past 17 years we've proven that a small independent newspaper can be run successfully and profitably without having to apply for government money."

The publisher says his newspaper has never applied for government funding because it's his duty to help pay off the deficit, not add to it.

"Not that that will ever be possible," he adds, "with government doling out the tax dollar faster than they can collect it. The country's debt is in the hundreds of billions of dollars and if they keep handing it out the way they do, the incentive to work for a dollar will disappear completely."

Alberta Native News is designed for and presented to Aboriginal communities across western Canada, the northern territories and beyond. And the job gets done, says owner/publisher Dave Moser, "through hard work, honest wages and the support of an advertising community that knows we not only offer value for the dollar, but that we will not hesitate to tell the truth nor compromise our editorial values because we're worried about getting our funds cut."

The success that the newspaper has garnered over the past 17 years, says Moser, also comes from solid teamwork, a reliable, dedicated staff, quality freelance writers and artists and a determination to get as much news into every issue of the newspaper as possible.

"We have a firm commitment toward journalist integrity," he commented. "We make every effort to present the whole issue. Our reporters are constantly working to present articles and stories that reflect the whole of Canada's Aboriginal community."

"Since the beginning," he explains, "the *Alberta Native News* has been dedicated to the preservation of Aboriginal art, culture and tradition. The paper serves to inform, to educate, and to enlighten. We make every effort to present the positive advances and images that deal with every aspect of Aboriginal lifestyle, from Native education and business to health issues and the arts."

Succes, editor Moser, comes from "hard work and reliability" and from "depending on salesmanship, not grantsmanship" for generating money. Earned money, he says, "is much more precious than free money and when you earn it, you are more responsible about how you spend it. This helps to guarantee the viability of the newspaper. You also come to appreciate that a hard days work is rewarded with money you've earned, not garnered through grants and other types of

government funding."

The *Alberta Native News* distributes its newspaper free of charge each month to First Nations Administration centres, Métis communities, government offices, businesses and related agencies throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and the Northwest Territories. The newspaper also has a large paid subscription base, one of the biggest of its kind in Canada.

Continued on page 25



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

Description:

The Métis National Council is seeking a skilled, energetic Director of Communications who is responsible in overseeing and implementing all work related to communications and media relations including:

- Advising on strategic communications approaches, needs, feasibility, methods and resource requirements;
- Provide communications support and planning through the provision of communications plans, strategies, proposal development, media lines and products;
- Gain exposure for the Métis Nation in Canadian political environment and media;
- Assess communications needs of initiatives and departments within the MNC and developing appropriate communications plans;
- Write, edit and produce a wide range of communications materials which might include news releases, news stories, promotional brochures, reports, proposals, briefing notes, newsletters, background documents and advertisements;
- Manage multiple projects and establishing priorities within tight time lines;
- Maintains network and works in collaboration with Governing Members of the MNC;
- Advises National President on current regional and national issues.

Education: Applicants should possess a post-secondary degree in Journalism or Communications OR an acceptable combination of education, training and/or experience.

Work Experience: Three years work experience in communications and knowledge of current Métis community, regional and national political issues is essential.

Salary Range: Within salary guidelines, commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Location: Candidates must be willing to travel and relocate to Ottawa.

Closing Date: September 21, 2001, 5:00 p.m. EDT

Individuals who feel they are qualified are invited to submit a covering letter (quoting the above reference number) along with a current resume to:

Executive Director, Métis National Council
330 Sparks St., Suite 201, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8

Fax: 613-232-4262

Telephone inquiries may be addressed to the Executive Director at 613-232-3216

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Applicant's Signature:

Healing fund behind schedule, but making a positive difference

by John Copley

When the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was established by the federal government in 1998 as a non-profit, non-tax-paying entity designed to help provide guidance and funds, as well as encouragement and support, for Aboriginal people suffering from the serious residual effects of the residential school system, the plan was to see the project completed by the end of next year. But Georges Erasmus, President and Chairman of the Foundation and Chair of the organization's Executive and Program Merit Review Committee, says even though the AHF project is both busy and successful, there is no possible way to meet its mandate of committing all of the foundation's resources to nationwide programs and projects by the 2003 target date.

"The problem simply is that the need is so great and it's so late in the game," Erasmus told media and the delegates gathered to hear him and other speakers at the recent Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia. "Residential schools were in operation for over 100 years and the impact was so devastating, the need is absolutely tremendous. There is no way that you can clean up what happened in just a few years."

Last December, the AFN was critical of the slow process and slow progress being made by the AHF, calling it too bureaucratic and too slow, especially when it came to approving applications. But things have been moving more quickly since this past spring when just \$59 million had been spent on 302 worthy projects or Contribution Agreements. As of August 1, 2001 over 500 projects had received \$96 million in funding aid. More than 175 projects are currently in the approval-waiting process; the total money sought through these applications adds up to just under \$40

million. The Healing Foundation began its endeavour with \$350 million.

Georges Erasmus says the foundation has been seeking an extension of the program with government. His group has already made various suggestions to government as to what the next steps should be, including program extensions that could run as long as 15 years; "an indefinite continuation" has also been proposed. A decision is expected to be announced sometime this September.

At the recent AFN Assembly in Halifax some of the nation's Chiefs criticized both the AFN and the AHF, telling them that they should put a higher priority on distributing aid to residential school survivors. "It's very, very slow; too slow," remarked Bryan McNabb, Chief of Saskatchewan's, George Gordon First Nation, in an interview with Southam News. Talking of the process that often sees waiting periods for funding approval take a year, and longer, McNabb said that his community has "many residential school survivors that are dying through suicide, alcohol and drugs. There has to be restructuring or something to speed up the process, something has to be done."

Erasmus takes the criticism in stride. He has, there's been so much. He knows there are more than 1,000 applications and program proposals coming into the foundation offices each year. He also knows that when the money became available in 1998 a promise was made, not just to government, but to the Aboriginal people that the foundation represents. That promise was to ensure accountability, to ensure the future has some hope for Aboriginal populations decimated by a system that failed to protect them, that chose assimilation over cultivation. The money for the AHF came from a government that failed Indigenous Canadians for centuries. Erasmus knows that the money, which incidentally has garnered many more millions in interest payments alone, isn't to be squandered or handed out to every person seeking assistance. Instead it is to be protected against those who would misuse it or direct it for some type of personal gain.

Georges Erasmus knows his responsibility in this endeavour is larger than anything he's undertaken before, just as he knows that when "you have money to hand out, and you have say no to some people, you're going to get some criticism."

Accountability is a problem that takes time to resolve, especially when people are submitting proposals that often run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Duplicated services, unproven theories, lack of proposal writing know-how... the list of hold-ups is both lengthy and understandable.

In a recent newsletter distributed by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Mr. Erasmus spoke highly of the new project being given Native Canadians while at the same time offering caution about believing everything you read.

"Just as there is resistance in Aboriginal communities," he said, "There is resistance to healing and reconciliation in Canadian society. Recently, a few people in the Canadian media have suggested that the residential school legacy is a myth. There is denial of the assimilationist intentions of the residential school system. Aboriginal people, in particular those who attended residential school, are not generally supported by the media."

He also gave a recent example about the positive



being created by national media.

The social renewal and healing movement, growing ever stronger throughout Aboriginal communities, is reestablishing the importance and relevance of Aboriginal traditions and cultures that have been for generations the subject of contempt and rancour by a dominant culture," Erasmus writes. "It is also dismantling the distorted perceptions of the history, identity, potential and realities of Aboriginal people. These new reactions are positive not only for Aboriginal people but for every Canadian. The efforts to cultivate a pseudo-image of Aboriginal people and their experience seem unrelenting at times, but as recent articles in the *National Post* on residential schools show, they are now seen, both by informed Canadians and Aboriginal people, as an opportunity to challenge and educate."

Georges Erasmus is currently serving his second term as President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Richard Kistabish is in his second term as vice-president. Jerome Berthelette is secretary and Carrielynn Lamouche was recently elected as treasurer.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a not-for-profit corporation, funds community-based healing programs which address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools, including intergenerational impacts. Program funding is accessible to Metis, Inuit, and First Nations people, status and non-status, both on and off reserve. For more information about the AHF write to the organization's head office, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7 or call (613) 237-4441. The toll free information line is 888-725-8886. Visit the AHF internet website at www.ahf.ca or send an email with your request to programs@ahf.ca.

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Fix the water supply or suffer the consequences says ecologist David Schindler

by John Copley

The topic of a two-day conference that took place on the Wahta Mohawk Reserve near Bala, Ontario, on July 24-25, *Water Security on First Nations*, could just as easily have been labelled *Water Security in Canada and America* - but not many in attendance knew that until they heard from Dr. David Schindler, one of more than two dozen speakers who took part in the seminar.

Dr. Schindler, Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta, spoke about the depleting water on many Canadian reserves, but his words will have just as much impact, if not more, on all Canadians, especially the 90 percent of us who reside within 300 kilometres of the American border.

Canada's water supply is in dire need of attention and if redirected efforts towards water conservation and usage are not quickly forthcoming, he assured, the consequences will eventually be fatal. He then went on to prove it through the use of graphs, maps, photos and scientific research results.

Reiterating the words of a previous speaker, Ovide Mercredi, a former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Dr. Schindler's message is in essence a warning to the millions of Canadians who haven't yet bothered to give the future a second thought - and that includes government and big business, especially forest and timber companies bent on stripping much of Canada's boreal forests clean.

Ovide Mercredi told conference participants that "the fundamental need right now of our communities is funding. Many of our communities do not enjoy the safe comforts other Canadians enjoy. Our treatment plants are not the same quality. We should seek out equity, and that's going to cost a lot of money."

It's going to cost a lot more than money, Schindler explained. If something isn't done soon.

"We're having a warming event," Schindler told the gathering, "and most people are deluded into thinking that that is a good thing." Dr. Schindler is an expert on Canada's water systems and supply. From 1968 to 1989, he founded and directed the Experimental Lakes Project of the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans near Kenora, Ontario, conducting interdisciplinary research on the effects of eutrophication, acid rain, radioactive elements and climate change on boreal ecosystems. His work has been widely used in formulating ecologically sound management policy in Canada, the USA and in Europe. His current research interests include the study of fisheries management in mountain lakes, the biomagnification of organochlorines in food chains, effects of climate change and UV radiation on lakes, and global carbon and nitrogen budgets. He teaches limnology, the philosophy, sociology and politics of science, science and public policy in Canada, and environmental decision making.

"Before 1968," he explained, "there had been no logged data" concerning the depletion or addition to the country's water supply. But that all changed after 1968 and even today weekly tests are being carried

out on the Experimental Lakes Project.

"When I first arrived at the project site there were three streams feeding the area and they flowed 365 days a year. Since 1968 there has been about a two degree rise in temperature and the resulting increase in evaporation now sees these same streams completely empty of water for about 160 days each year."

This phenomenal change in weather patterns, he explained, is caused both by man and his use of fossil fuels, lax laws, insufficient regulations and in many cases, no regulations regarding water safety standards and by the natural order of things, as in evolu-

tionary changes that happen slowly, but surely, every single day the planet spins in its orbit,

It doesn't matter what is causing the problems, he says, what does matter is that something is done to head off what he calls an impending disaster. He told the conference that Ottawa needs to get over "its fascination with the slinky dollar" and get down to the real issue, solving problems.

Through the use of slides and photographs Dr. Schindler took the gathering of delegates through the stages of research that has now determined just what lies ahead for Canadians in years to come. It wasn't a pretty picture. From salt corroded fresh water lakes such as southeastern Alberta's Stumpy Lake to the now completely waterless lake beds that sit parched and dry in Saskatchewan's interior, the evidence of global warming and the increased evaporation of the world's water supply is astounding. The Old Man River Dam in southern Alberta is just one of the reasons why any water exists in that part of the country at all. In Saskatchewan the population counts on about 87 percent of its water supply draining in from the Rocky Mountains.

Continued on page 9

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Program to help street kids suffering funding shortages

by John Copley

This is the last of a two part series about Winnipeg, Manitoba's Circle of Life Thunderbird House and the community supported Oshkitwaawin (new life/new beginnings) Program that delivers a message of hope and understanding to the street gangs in Manitoba's capital.

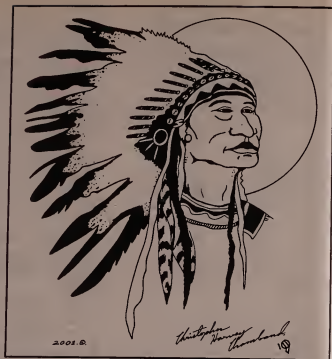
The Circle of Life Thunderbird House, also known as Whaka Pimadiziwi Inayasiwigam, is located on the corner of Higgins and Main Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The beautifully and traditionally designed facility, the inspiration of renowned Aboriginal architect, Douglas Cardinal, opened its doors on March 21, 2000. The building, with its eagle-shaped, eye-catching copper roof embracing the structure under the protective cover of its huge wings, is as beautiful inside as it is out. Numerous offices, meeting rooms and a serving kitchen that accommodates healing sessions, counseling programs and community meetings allow the tenants of Thunderbird House to work closely together or even to host a multitude of events simultaneously.

Glen Cochrane is one of those tenants. He's the Street Gang Prevention Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg. The Oshkitwaawin (new life/new beginnings) Program that he and his group are working with has made a positive difference since it began operating on Winnipeg's streets last summer, but Cochrane says not everyone is getting the message. "There is no easy solution and there are no easy answers," Cochrane replies, when asked how long it will take to get the street gang problem in Manitoba's capital under control. "One thing is certain, if crime prevention is going to work it's going to take the effort, the understanding and the will of everyone involved and that means the parents, the communities, the schools, the agencies, the youth and of course all levels of government."

But that effort and understanding has not been as forthcoming as Cochrane would like to see it. The problems, he says, are many and most of the solutions come about as a result of the intense one-on-one liaison with youth and kids living on the streets.

"It takes a lot more than a smile, a pat on the back and a few promises to get the attention of the people we are trying to help," he explained during a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "What is needed is symmetry in the system, particularly between the various levels of government. As it stands, one group is instrumental in getting the ball to roll uphill while another turns its back and babbles about needing proven results before they'll help rectify a malady they say no one has yet found a cure for. The trouble is, there is a cure and it isn't difficult to prove. Many of the programs we are trying to get started are already running successfully in other parts of North America but we can't seem to get anyone to listen. One hand isn't sure what the other one is doing, and it seems that every person involved in decision-making and money spending has their own personal agenda and views about how things should be run."

"Look at the disparity of understanding between the Premier's comments when we opened the Circle of Life Thunderbird House and Manitoba's Attorney General when asked to help fund a tattoo removal program for example. A year before the doors to the Circle of Life Thunderbird House were opened, Winnipeg Mayor Glen Murray said, "the creation of a visible downtown cultural institution celebrating Aboriginal life is a major step on the road to healing our community." The day the facility was opened Winnipeg Councillor Dan Vandal claimed that "this is a proud day for Winnipeg's Aboriginal community, a day that demonstrates our great respect for Aboriginal cultural and spiritual values." The same day, Premier Gary Filmon proclaimed the "new landmark" would be "a centerpiece in the revitalization of Winnipeg's North Main" area. He said the construction of the roundhouse will provide a home for Manitoba's Aboriginal community to share its culture and sense of spirituality. "In fact, most of the dignitaries talked about how wonderful



the new facility would be, how useful it would be. But when it comes to funding meaningful programs, you don't see any of the bureaucrats trying to set up a photo opportunity with the local media to announce what they are doing to help support and fund the programs. That's because there is no funding. If it wasn't for Aboriginal Human Resources our program would already be dead in the water, and that unfortunate reality remains true, especially since we're currently operating on what is to be the final six months of available funds from this source. We need help and we're just not getting it."

The Oshkitwaawin Program receives no money from the City of Winnipeg, the province or the federal government. The Winnipeg Police Service supports what Cochrane is doing, but they haven't initiated any programs or strategies with the help agency. Winnipeg businesses are happy to see someone trying to get the kids off the street, but they haven't come up with a plan to help with funding either.

"We feel that if a partnership could be formed between the three levels of government, key community service organizations and a team of community residents, we could put our heads together and create viable programs to generate positive change. Finding money for programs and more importantly, sustaining those programs to include follow-up, is proving to be a difficult task but awareness stimulates action and that's what we are in the process of doing right now."

In addition to his job as Prevention Coordinator for Winnipeg's street gangs, Glenn Cochrane is a board member and past president of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the current Chair of the Interagency Gang Coalition, the president of Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, a board member with the Winnipeg

Continued opposite

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Application packages are available as of August 30, 2001 at the Office of the City Clerk, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1 St. Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton T5J 2R7 and on the City's Web Site. An application with three current letters of reference should be returned to the Office of the City Clerk by 4:30 p.m. on September 28, 2001.

For more information or an application package, call the Office of the City Clerk at 496-8167 or the web site at: www.gov.edmonton.ab.ca/recruitment



PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ABORIGINAL URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Each year at its Organizational Meeting in October, City Council appoints citizens to its various boards, commissions and committees.

Applications from persons who would be willing to sit on The City of Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee for the year 2001/2002 are requested.

In some instances City Council may re-appoint members who wish to continue to serve, therefore the number of appointments shown does not necessarily reflect the number of new appointees.

Applicants may be requested to submit to a brief interview by City Council.

Particulars on the Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee are as follows:

Number to be Appointed	Eligibility Qualifications	Term of Appointment	Total Number of Members	Meetings Held	Approximate Length of Meeting	Regular Time of Meeting
12	50% plus one of total members shall be aboriginal people and one of the aboriginal members shall be a youth member, 18-25. If applying for the youth position, state age in letter.	1 year	13	Monthly (First Wednesday)	2 hours	4:45 p.m.

Your application should state your reason for applying and service expectations. A resume of no more than two 8 1/2" x 11" pages should be attached showing background and experience. Your personal information will only be used by City Council in consideration of committee appointments. If you have questions about the use of this information, you may contact the Deputy City Clerk at 268-5861.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 4:30 P.M., 2000 SEPTEMBER 14.

Applications should be forwarded to:
City Clerk (Calgary)
The City of Calgary
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Calgary, Alberta T2P 2X5

Between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., applications may be dropped off at:
City Clerk's
Main Floor, 700 Macleod Trail South
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Applications may be FAXED to: (403) 268-2362

Should you require any further information, please telephone (403) 268-5861

Daina L. Garner, City Clerk

Funding shortages, Continued from page 8

Native Alliance and a member of the Winnipeg Committee for Safety and City Council's Committee on the Sex Trade & Exploitation of Children. He's totally committed to his project and others that create awareness, improve self-esteem and generate hope for Manitoba's Native peoples.

The eldest of 10 siblings, Glenn Cochrane knows what it's like to live on the street. He grew up on the streets of Winnipeg.

"The numbers of children and youth in crisis grow larger every day. The poor, the challenged, the abused, the neglected – so many of our young Aboriginal children going to jail – it is a sad thing. But the only way to rid ourselves of this cycle is to rid ourselves of the seed that initiates it. The common misnomer is 'everything begins in the home', but that is not necessarily the case with Native children. It's partly because of these widely misinterpreted clichés that nobody is willing to step forward and do the right thing. Everyone is waiting for the parent to step in and take control. It won't happen, at least not yet. That will be a reality for the next generations. First, however, we will have to heal this one. Remember, our homes were taken from us, our children hauled off to learn a new culture, a new religion, a new way of life. It back-fired – but by the time it did, it was already 150 years too late. The consequences of harsh decisions by government and the blind eye of the church has led us to where we are today. It will take a series of positive actions to overcome the obstacles that have been placed in front of us – but I have no doubt that we will persevere just as we have for the past three and a half centuries."

If you want to know more about the Circle of Life Thunderbird House and/or the Oshkitwaawin (new life/new beginnings) Program, contact Glenn Cochrane in Winnipeg by calling (204) 940-4252. Fax inquiries can be directed to (204) 940-4243.

Fix the water, Continued from page 7

"If not for that mountain water supply," assured Dr. Schindler, "there would be no agriculture and therefore, no population" in Saskatchewan. With evaporation rates skyrocketing to more than 600 percent in some parts of the country, it won't be long before water is scarce, especially in southern regions.

"More than 90 percent of Canada's water flows north and the population base is located south," explained Dr. Schindler, who urged government to begin making plans to improve our chances of survival in what will certainly become a much drier country in years to come.

Dr. David Schindler's comments came just moments after the gathering heard from several Aboriginal leaders, including Hank Neapetung, Chief of Saskatchewan's Yellowquill First Nation, who produced several flasks of murky to very dirty water taken from his community water system, both at ground and subsurface levels.

"In our community," said Chief Neapetung, "we have severe illness and disease, diabetes being the most common of these. We think these illnesses are directly related to the water issues in our community." Neapetung said he's not gone to the media or the public with his concerns because "we are a very accommodating people – we'd like to negotiate these issues with government."



Fiscal issues come into play, he said, and money just isn't available for the magnitude of work that must be done to ensure safe water in the Yellowquill First Nation community. He also said that Native people must be able to play a role and have an equal say about how to fix the problems in their communities.

Summit organizer, Liberal MP Dennis Mills, is confident that government will deliver the goods.

"I don't think there's any question from the prime minister down," Mills told participating conference delegates, "that if we need clean water, we have to come up with a funding formula."

The need is there, just ask Dr. David Schindler. No one knows more about the subject than he does. Government, it's your move. The results of the July Water Summit have provided you with enough material to make a decision – don't be late making this one.

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Sun Peaks dispute brings boycott and arrests

The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Matthew Coon Come, has called for a boycott of the Delta Hotel chain by all First Nations citizens in Canada. The chain is behind the move of the Sun Peaks Resort Corporation to have the members of the Secwepemc Nation arrested for setting up a camp on their traditional territory.

"The Assembly of First Nations is calling on all First Nations to boycott the Delta Hotel chain. The chain has put its financial interests ahead of the recognition of the Aboriginal Rights of the First Nations who own that land. The *Delgamuukw* decision of the Supreme Court of Canada has clearly stated that Aboriginal title still exists in British Columbia and that the economic and legal right to the land still belongs to First Nations. The private interests behind this project are acting as if we didn't exist and their interests are the only ones worth protecting. We must show them they are wrong and

the bottom line is the way to direct that message," stated National Chief Matthew Coon Come.

The arrest of four Elders and land-users at Sun Peaks will change nothing, Neskonlith Chief Arthur Manuel says. The peaceful and voluntary arrests of 74-year-old Elder Irene Billy, Henry Saul, Charlie Willard and George Manuel Jr. took place on the piece of Secwepemc Territory covered by the Sun Peaks injunction by a contingent of more than a dozen RCMP officers. Most of the protesters had moved last week to a camp across the road, and the nearby McGillivray Lake camp remains in operation.

Elder Irene Billy said, "This land is our home and it's always been our home. Last week they got a piece of paper saying we have to move. It's not right."

"Today was a symbolic moment for our people," Chief Arthur Manuel said. "Among those arrested, two are direct descendants of Chief Neskonlith. One was one of our most respected Elders and one was the son of Grand Chief George Manuel. For the people of Neskonlith and Adams Lake, and for the Elders, land-users and youth who remain at Skwelkwew't (Sun Peaks), the arrests only strengthen our resolve. The four band members are heroes in our struggle for freedom on our own lands."

Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, was also on hand to witness the arrests. "This is not the end but a new beginning," he said. "Sun Peaks and the RCMP have only served to escalate the struggle. The Secwepemc people will not back down because they have nowhere else to go. This is their home."

Chief Phillip observed that Minister Robert Nault could have visited the Skwelkwew't Protection Centre himself when he was in the interior earlier this month. "Instead he avoided Skwelkwew't and tried to wipe his hands of the whole affair. He has paraded across the country saying there is a need for more accountability in First Nations communities. Is he not responsible, as Minister of Indian Affairs, to enter into discussions regarding the heart of the Sun Peaks issue, the constitutionally protected Aboriginal title and rights of the Secwepemc? Apparently, he thinks not. If he is not accountable to First Nation communities or to those who elected his party to government, just who is Minister Nault accountable to?"

Chief Phillip further stated "Under the Constitution



Act, Minister Nault cannot just conveniently forget 'Indians and Indian lands.' Aboriginal title and rights are 'recognized and affirmed' in section 35 of Canada's Constitution and further recognized by legal decisions like the *Delgamuukw* decision."

"Rather than hiding his head in obsolete policies, like the Comprehensive Claims Policy, Minister Nault should work up the courage to face and accept the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government is a fact. It is most certainly a fact that Minister Nault must be involved in Skwelkwew't. Until he does, there will be no resolution and that's a fact."

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The Healing Journey

Residential school victims insulted by court settlement

by John Copley

When the British Columbia Supreme Court rendered their mid-July decision on how much money the United Church of Canada and the federal government had to pay for abusing their trusted position as guardians and caregivers for Aboriginal children attending a Port Alberni residential school several decades ago, Native leaders were angry and frustrated. "It's insulting," said the Provincial Residential School Project (PRSP), an advocate for former victims who attended the poorly operated and now-defunct school system that once operated across the country. A large number of the schools have been accused and their workers convicted on numerous occasions for atrocities of abuse committed by former administrators and staff of the government sanctioned, church-run schools. PRSP said Chief Justice Donald Brenner "profoundly failed" to address the issues fairly and with compassion, as was evident in a paltry financial settlement that will only deliver 10 percent of what the victims were seeking.

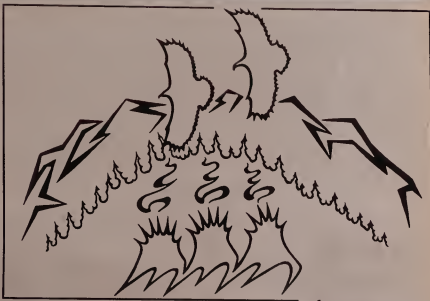
Dismissing claims for direct liability based on negligence and breach of fiduciary duty, and dismissing one claim in its entirety, Justice Brenner failed the system and the people who were once forced to suffer under it.

"This judgment shows how little value this B.C. Supreme Court case places on the lives of these people and the potential they had ripped away from them," added the PRSP, in light of the fact that once the victims pay their legal expenses, little money will be left. Brenner awarded as little as \$10,000 to some of victims with the largest amount of compensation, \$145,000, awarded to only one person.

The defence offered by the church and the federal government included statements that suggested because conditions at the school were so poor, the problems the plaintiffs are suffering today would have occurred anyway, even if they had not been physically, sexually and mentally abused.

"The application of this defence strategy in order to minimize their financial liability is depraved and morally indefensible," PRSP statements said. Angered at Brenner's easy capitulation to the arguments offered by the defence team, the PRSP said, "Canadian society at the highest levels has not abandoned its abusive ways."

Convicted pedophile Arthur Plint, whose name has become an ominous reminder to every person who ever entered a residential school, is already in jail serving time for the several convictions he's faced in the courtroom, though many charges against him have been stayed or dismissed. Brenner ordered him to pay \$93,000 in damages this time around, but there is little or no chance of anyone collecting the money. Plint is financially broke and will remain in jail for at least another year or more. Twenty-one other cases



Floyd Bladue. ©

involving the Port Alberni School, many of which named Plint as an aggressor and an accomplice of abuse, have been settled out of court. Figures are not known but sources say some of the claims paid exceeded Brenner's offering of about \$500,000 for all seven defendants. The victims were seeking \$5 million in damages and are currently contemplating an appeal.

In his ruling, Justice Donald Brenner found the church to be 75 percent and the government to be 25 percent responsible for the act of atrocity perpetrated on plaintiffs Frederick Leroy Barney, Randy Fred, Marvin Watts, Ralph Johnson, Dennis Stewart and Marlon Watts. A claim by residential school victim, Martha Stewart, was dismissed.

The Port Alberni school, one of hundreds that operated across the country for more than 100 years, was closed in 1972. Plint, now 83 years old, was convicted in 1995 and sentenced to 11 years in prison for sexually abusing children at the school.

To date more than 5,000 civil suits have been launched by Aboriginal peoples across the country for damages suffered under the residential school system.

Best wishes,
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Bosco Homes offers diverse range of services for children, youth and families

by John Copley

Bosco Homes, A Society for Children, Adolescents and Families, is a non-profit organization that was incorporated in Alberta on November 27, 1987. For the past 13 years Bosco Homes has been providing a number of services to high-risk children.

"Our mission," explained Bosco Homes Director of Development, John McKenzie, "in a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*, "is to provide educational and treatment services to children and adolescents suffering from severe emotional and psychiatric disorders such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Bi-Polar Disorder and Schizophrenia. We also provide support and counselling to families who struggle with child and adolescent behavioural disorders."

Bosco Homes' programs and services include intensive treatment, group care, foster care, education services, community counselling, child and youth support services, work experience and family preservation programs. Most of the services take place within the ten group homes, four schools and four treatment centres currently in operation in locations that include the County of Strathcona, the City of Edmonton, the Town of Stony Plain, and the northern-based cities of Yellowknife and Fort Smith. An Aboriginal component has also been successfully integrated into the Bosco Homes programs.

"The Bosco Homes Aboriginal Program Services," explained McKenzie, "was established to provide more effective services to children and families of Aboriginal ancestry. The program ensures that the inherent rights of Aboriginal children are respected and practiced following the natural laws of kindness, honesty, sharing and determination."

The society also believes that "when providing these services, it is vital to invite the participation of Aboriginal people in all aspects of the agency's activities."

Bosco Homes has developed and implemented numerous Aboriginal initiatives into its programming schedule, and they've done it without any core funding from government (within its contracts) to defray the costs.

The organization's Executive Director, Dr. Gus Rozycki, is the man responsible for the society's day-to-day operations. He came to Canada in 1960 after having spent 15 years living in refugee camps created as a result of the devastation and chaos brought on by Nazi Germany during World War II.

"The lessons of 'love thy neighbour' were imprinted on Dr. Rozycki during his childhood," explained McKenzie, "and he's never forgotten what it was like. It doesn't take much convincing to get him involved or to have him lend a helping hand."

Years of coaching children and teens, managing bands and choirs, working as a volunteer for WIN House and spearheading a battered women's shelter in Sherwood Park have all added to Rozycki's determination to keep plugging away, to keep stretching his hand out to others.

"Dr. Rozycki left an executive position with the Alberta Teachers Association in

1987 to take on the challenges of running a non-profit charitable organization," continued McKenzie. "Under his leadership, Bosco Homes has become one of the finest services to some of society's most troubled children. These children, most with histories of neglect or abuse, mental or emotional illness and dangerous and destructive behaviours, find hope at Bosco Homes."

The Bosco Homes Society's Aboriginal Program has been busy in the past several years developing and implementing programs designed to ensure that the organization's motto, "Give A Kid A Chance," is met. Some of the organization's Aboriginal initiatives to date include: the hiring of a full time Aboriginal Program Coordinator to assess, develop and integrate a range of Aboriginal resources to benefit Aboriginal children in care, and to assist the staff to become more aware of the cultural traditions of First Nation children. They have co-hosted Aboriginal summer camps with the Poundmaker Adolescent Treatment Centre, established sacred grounds inclusive of sweatlodge and teaching tipi's at the Ardrossan Bosco Homes ranch site. Aboriginal Elders were consulted and were instrumental in many facets of program and resource development. A mini powwow was held to celebrate Aboriginal culture and to showcase the achievement of the children.

"This special day," explained McKenzie, "featured Elders overseeing the setting up and taking down of three tipis, a drum making session, a dream catchers workshop and storytelling by an Elder that honoured the oral history of the Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal singers and dancers put on a performance which included both teaching and audience participation."

Two other important achievements that came about as a result of Bosco Homes initiatives include an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Workshop (16 hours) that was developed and presented to all Bosco Homes staff, teachers and students. From July 1, 2000 to June 16, 2001 more than 400 individuals had participated in these workshops. Developed and facilitated by the Aboriginal Program Coordinator, these workshops meet the standards set forth by the Aboriginal Program Council of the Alberta Association of Services to Children and Families. The other has seen Bosco Homes represented on various regional initiatives (e.g. Ma'mow, Capital Region Aboriginal Service Providers, Alberta Aboriginal ad Hoc Committee on FAS, etc.). Bosco Homes continues to partner with Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal agencies/organizations including the Poundmakers Adolescent Treatment Centre, Blue Quills First Nations College, the Canadian Friendship Centres and others.

But more help is needed. Volunteers, particularly those of Aboriginal ancestry, are urged to contact the Bosco Homes Society for Children, Adolescents and Families. Contact information can be found at the end of this article. Government and business sectors are also urged to get involved by contributing time, funds and company name to worthwhile ventures and projects for Alberta's troubled youth and their families. "Not enough is being done in Alberta, or for that matter

Continued on page 27

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Diet and exercise dramatically delay Type 2 Diabetes

At least 10 million Americans at high risk for type 2 diabetes can sharply lower their chances of getting the disease with diet and exercise, according to the findings of a major clinical trial announced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson.

"In view of the rapidly rising rates of obesity and diabetes in America, this good news couldn't come at a better time," said Secretary Thompson. "So many of our health problems can be avoided through diet, exercise and making sure we take care of ourselves. By promoting healthy lifestyles, we can improve the quality of life for all Americans, and reduce health care costs dramatically."

The same study found that treatment with the oral diabetes drug metformin (Glucophage®) also reduces diabetes risk, though less dramatically, in people at high risk for Type 2 diabetes.

Participants randomly assigned to intensive lifestyle intervention reduced their risk of getting Type 2 diabetes by 58 percent. On average, this group maintained their physical activity at 30 minutes per day, usually with walking or other moderate intensity exercise, and lost 5-7 percent of their body weight. Participants randomized to treatment with metformin reduced their risk of getting Type 2 diabetes by 31 percent.

The findings came from the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a major clinical trial comparing diet and exercise to treatment with metformin in 3,234 people with impaired glucose tolerance, a condition that often precedes diabetes. On the advice of the DPP's external data monitoring board, the trial ended a year early because the data had clearly answered the main research questions.

Smaller studies in China and Finland have shown that diet and exercise can delay Type 2 diabetes in at-risk people, but the DPP, conducted at 27 centres nationwide, is the first major trial to show that diet and exercise can effectively delay diabetes in a diverse American population of overweight people with impaired glucose tolerance (IGT). IGT is a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet diabetic.

Of the 3,234 participants enrolled in the DPP, 45 percent are from minority groups that suffer disproportionately from Type 2 diabetes: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians. The trial also recruited other groups known to be at higher risk for Type 2 diabetes, including individuals age 60 and older, women with a history of gestational diabetes, and people with a first-degree relative with Type 2 diabetes.

Lifestyle intervention worked as well in men and women and in all the ethnic groups. It also worked well in people age 60 and older, who have a nearly 20 percent prevalence of diabetes, reducing the development of diabetes by 71 percent. Metformin was also effective in men and women and in all the ethnic groups, but was relatively ineffective in the older volunteers and in those who were less overweight," said DPP study chair Dr. David Nathan of Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

DPP volunteers were randomly assigned to one of the following groups:

- intensive lifestyle changes with the aim of reducing weight by 7 percent through a low-fat diet and exercising for 150 minutes a week;
- treatment with the drug metformin (850 mg twice a day), approved in 1995 to

treat Type 2 diabetes;

• a standard group taking placebo pills in place of metformin;

The latter two groups also received information on diet and exercise.

A fourth arm of the study, treatment with the drug troglitazone combined with standard diet and exercise recommendations, was discontinued in June 1998 due to the potential for liver toxicity.

DPP participants ranged from age 25 to 85, with an average age of 51. Upon entry to the study, all had impaired glucose tolerance as measured by an oral glucose tolerance test, and all were overweight, with an average body mass index (BMI) of 34. About 29 percent of the DPP standard group developed diabetes during the average follow-up period of 3 years. In contrast, 14 percent of the diet and exercise arm and 22 percent of the metformin arm developed diabetes.

Volunteers in the diet and exercise arm achieved the study goal, on average a 7 percent—or 15-pound—weight loss, in the first year and generally sustained a 5 percent total loss for the study's duration. Participants in the lifestyle intervention arm received training in diet, exercise (most chose walking), and behaviour modification skills.

Can the interventions prevent diabetes altogether? "We simply don't know how long, beyond the 3-year period studied, diabetes can be delayed," says Dr. Nathan. "We hope to follow the DPP population to learn how long the interventions are effective." The researchers will analyze the data to determine whether the interventions reduced cardiovascular disease and atherosclerosis, major causes of death in people with Type 2 diabetes.

"Every year a person can live free of diabetes means an added year of life free of the pain, disability, and medical costs incurred by this disease," said Dr. Allen Spiegel, director of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, which sponsored the DPP. "The DPP findings represent a major step toward the goal of containing and ultimately reversing the epidemic of Type 2 diabetes in this country."

Diabetes affects more than 16 million people in the United States. It is the main cause of kidney failure, limb amputations, and new onset blindness in adults and a major cause of heart disease and stroke. Type 2 diabetes accounts for up to 95 percent of all diabetes cases. Most common in adults over age 40, Type 2 diabetes affects 8 percent of the U.S. population age 20 and older. It is strongly associated with obesity (more than 80 percent of people with Type 2 diabetes are overweight), inactivity, family history of diabetes, and racial or ethnic background. Compared

Continued on page 21



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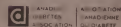
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Education and Training

Oteenow Employment and Training Society open house gets underway on Sept 12

by John Copley

In 1996 Human Resources Canada introduced what they called, Regional Bilateral Agreements, or RBAs. In essence, the new initiative was an improved alternative to the Pathways to Success program, upon whose model the RBAs were built. Those entering into the new agreement from Alberta were Treaties 6, 7 and 8. With the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements in place, and Treaty 7 located in the province's southern regions, both Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 got together to discuss common issues and concerns, one of them being future employment and equitable opportunity. When the meeting was over a new partnership had been formed and a new agreement had been reached.

"The two Treaty Tribal Councils recognized the need to create a single entity that would share resources and provide First Nations citizens in Edmonton the opportunity not only to find employment, but to receive the training they would need to get that employment," explained Victor Horseman, the Labour Market Program Director for the Edmonton-based, Oteenow Employment and Training Society (OETS). "The partnership would allow for the pooling of resources and provide a more effective service delivery mechanism," he continued. "As a result of this partnership initiative, Oteenow was born."

Funded through Human Resources Development Canada, the Oteenow Employment and Training Society came into being on April 1, 1999, when a "new First Nations Board assumed responsibility for employment and training for First Nations people in Edmonton."

Since that time the Society has grown and new ideas and initiatives have increased the activity and the opportunity for First Nations citizens who reside in the provincial capital. The mandate and the mission statement of the organization have been reworded and expanded over the years as new programs come on stream, but the Society's vision doesn't waver.

"Our vision," explained Victor Horseman, "is to ensure that First Nations people in the Edmonton metropolitan area have the opportunity to be healthy, independent and employed. Self-reliance usually leads to a more productive lifestyle. The

human resource development programs and services initiated and offered through Oteenow are designed to accommodate education and employment training. In essence, we are providing services that help our clients learn what is needed to gain and maintain personal freedom through employment and meaningful choices. Skills training, educational programs and apprenticeship and industry training are among the numerous viable programs offered or available through OETS.

Oteenow programs focus on areas such as youth, high school retention, long parenting, disabilities and both unemployment and the underemployed.

The mandate of OETS is to provide governance and management of First Nations' urban resources through the implementation of labour market programs and services that benefit First Nation members residing within Edmonton's core. Other mandate responsibilities include improving skills development and employment, providing quality client-assisted services, working with individuals and groups to enhance partnerships and strengthening the steps towards accountability through community involvement and regular record-keeping. The mandate of the Society is diverse and flexible and in addition to the aforementioned programs, assists First Nation clients while they make the transition from unemployment to employment, and dependency to independence. "On Wednesday, September 12 the Oteenow Employment and Training Society will host an Open House," invited Victor Horseman. "Anyone interested in learning first hand what we are about and what we have to offer is welcome to attend. At that time the Society will be presenting its annual report. Those attending will have the opportunity to look at the organization's activities over the past fiscal year and learn about some of the new initiatives planned for 2002."

The open house will take place from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.

OETS offers a lengthy list of labour market and employment assistance programs and services as well as a series of programs specifically designed for youth. Participants must meet certain eligibility requirements including proof of First Nation treaty status.

"Participants must be at least 16 years old, be out of the school system for at least two full calendar years and reside within metropolitan Edmonton," explained Horseman. "Motivated individuals committed to training and determined to succeed are welcome."

Oteenow has been involved and/or instrumental in many projects and activities during the past year. The list is lengthy and the best way to learn more about these programs and how you can benefit by participating is to attend the Society's Open House on September 12. It will take place at the Oteenow offices at 202, 10470-176 Street in Edmonton. For more information phone (780) 444-0911 or fax (780) 444-3477. Email inquiries can be directed to: admin@oteenow.com.

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Sunchild CyberSchool: first in Alberta

by John Copley

The term "cyber-school" is a name one might associate with an old *Star Trek* television series, but in reality, education has come a long way since the early 1970s. So has the understanding of what enables some students to do well, while others struggle through every grade. First Nations, Metis and other Indigenous peoples of Canada have educational disadvantages far greater and far more complex than those of most Canadians, many of these disadvantages coming as a result of the legacy of the residential school era.

Research, including the low numbers of First Nations students graduating from high school and university in Canada, indicate that there is a problem — but what is being done to correct it? Southern Alberta's Sunchild First Nation believes they have found the answer. They've developed CyberSchool, or school programs that can be taken over the internet. Expectations are high and because the programs have been specifically designed for Aboriginal students, the odds of success are good.

"The Sunchild School," explained Sunchild CyberSchool Program Director, Martin Sacher, in an interview with *Alberta Native News*, "has developed an online model that has been specifically tailored to meet the unique situations and conditions of First Nations students today. This is the first school program of its type being offered in Alberta at the moment, and development is already in progress to ensure maximum provincial use by 2003. We believe that the formula we've come up with will help make the difference between success and failure."

If the results of a cyber school grade 12 pilot program are any indication, success is at the end of the rainbow — the 78 percent who successfully completed the program can vouch for that. But why will this unique program work when traditional schools have failed? "First of all," explained Sacher, "you have to understand why First Nations students are experiencing difficulties. For example, traditional First Nation schools have a very difficult time attracting high end academic instructors. If the quality of instruction for First Nations is not equivalent to the public system, then it follows that academic results will not be equal for First Nation students."

Martin Sacher cited two other reasons why Aboriginal students have a history of poor school attendance and poor marks in the traditional school system.

"Traditional First Nation Schools do not, as a rule, follow the same rigorous format and outline for student work, assignments and tests," he explained. "It therefore follows that if the process is not equivalent in First Nation schools, then the results will not be the same as in public schools. Finally, most First Nation schools suffer from low enrolment. As a result, most of these schools cannot offer a full complement of high end academic programs because quite simply, they do not have adequate student numbers to justify the cost of the program."

Sunchild CyberSchool follows the Alberta cur-



THE MORNING FLIGHT.

© CHRISTOPHER HARVEY CHANDAWO 1999

riculum, offers the same programs as traditional school rooms and even maintains personal contact between students and instructors. Textbooks and other resources are Alberta Education approved. Other resources are approved through Alberta Learning. All administrators and teachers are certified by the Minister of Education and Alberta Education.

"Sunchild CyberSchool is a model that thrives on accessing quality instructors and quality education," assured Sacher. "It is not glorified distant education

or correspondence material. It is not modular in format. It does allow for student/teacher and student/student interaction and contact and it is accountable for student performance and student attendance."

Sunchild CyberSchool makes it possible for First Nation schools anywhere to access their programs, each one operated by a quality instructor and each one at a fraction of the cost of the traditional school operating system. How?

Continued on page 34



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Three new titles from the Stories From the Seventh Fire series in production

Production is underway again for the Storytellers Productions team, currently creating three new titles

to round out the acclaimed *Stories From the Seventh Fire* limited series. Following the success of *Winter Tales*, the team is now in production on *Spring, Summer and Fall*, having just completed voice recordings in both Cree and English at Edmonton's Wolf Willow Sound. Associate Producer Tantoo Cardinal (*Smoke Signals*, *Legends of the Fall*, *Black Robe*) has returned as voice of Mother Wolf while Gordon Tootosis (North of 60, *Geronimo*, *Reindeer Games*) plays the voice of The Storyteller.

Stories From the Seventh Fire celebrates the rich oral tradition of the Aboriginal culture as it relates traditional Cree legends. Renowned Ojibway artist Norval Morrisseau's striking illustrations create a visual backdrop for these tales told from a human perspective, which are animated by Vancouver-based Bardel Animation. A series of "wolf tales" (stories inspired by the natural world) feature a mother wolf telling a bedtime story to her cub. Calgary-based Aureya A is creating the 3-D "creature animation" for this portion of the series. Illustrating the wolf tales is live-action wildlife footage from Edmonton filmmaker Albert Karvonen.

Stories From the Seventh Fire is produced by Storytellers Productions, a pro-

duction company with offices in Edmonton and Vancouver. The award-winning team includes producers Greg Coyes (*Learning With Love*), Ava Karvonen (*Return of the Peregrine*), Gerni Cook (*Tracking Stolen Horses*) and Tantoo Cardinal (*Stories From the Seventh Fire*). It has garnered several awards including "Best Animation" at the San Francisco American Indian Film Festival, "Best Animation" at the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Awards, Telefilm Canada/Television Northern Canada's award for "Best Canadian English-Language Television Program Produced by an Aboriginal Person", a Rosie Award for "Best Children's Programming", and two awards for "Storytelling" and "Best Communication to a Young Audience" at the International Wildlife Film Festival in Missoula, Montana.

The special was recently invited to be screened at the Planet in Focus Film Festival in Toronto in September 2001, and is featured as part of the permanent display in the Aboriginal wing at the Provincial Museum of Alberta in Edmonton.

The next three episodes will be broadcast on CBC, VISION TV, Alberta, ACCESS-TV, the Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTIN) and CFRN TV.

Storytellers Productions is a joint venture with Scorched Wood Communications, Dinosaurs Soup Productions and Reel Girls Media. *Stories From the Seventh Fire* was developed and is produced with the support of CFRN Television, the Aboriginal People's Television Network, the COGECO Development Fund, the TELUS Television Development Fund, the CFRN Production Fund, the Shaw Children's Programming Initiative, the Shaw Television Broadcast Fund, the Shaw Geoffrey R. Conway Fund, the Video Television Production Fund, the Canwest Global Independent Producer's Fund, the National Film Board of Canada, the Telefilm Aboriginal Fund, the Canadian Television Fund, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and Bardel Animation.



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Focus on Lac La Biche

Lac La Biche region has rich Aboriginal history

by Ennis Morris

When David Thompson arrived in the Lac La Biche region in 1798 he was looking for the esteem and prestige that would be his prize for finding the elusive Northwest Passage, a Pacific/Atlantic sea route that remains, even today, embedded in a subject of controversy between Canada and the United States of America.

But what he found instead was a young and vibrant community of predominately First Nations and Metis people. But dotting the white sandy shores of beautiful Lac La Biche Lake was evidence of another culture and another society taking shape. The settler had made his way inland from the Atlantic seaboard several decades earlier and Alberta's Lakeland District was a dream come true for the many newcomers determined to succeed, and ready to ply their trades as farmers, blacksmiths, teachers, storekeepers, lawmakers and more. Today, the Lac La Biche region remains an area of choice for many of the global visitors who travel to Alberta again.

Long before the arrival of the settler, however, the area was populated by highly mobile Plains Indian cultures that moved with the migration of the bison herds that once roamed the plains in numbers as plentiful as today's summer mosquito population. Archeological and other evidence of early life in the region dates back several thousand years, most of the data coming from areas along Alberta's major river valleys and within its slowly disappearing boreal forests.

The fur trade, which flourished in northern Alberta until well after the beginning of the 20th century, really got its push during a 40 year span of competi-

tive trading between the rivaling Hudson's Bay and Northwest Company's, who eventually joined forces in 1821. Today, the Hudson's Bay Company, which was first chartered by King Charles II of England in the year 1670, remains one of the largest department store chains in Canada.

During the early years of colonization numerous adventurers, explorers, cartographers and land surveyors travelled into what is today Alberta's Lakeland

and Protestant faiths soon saw the area evolve into a settlement that would eventually prove to be among the province's most viable and durable economic bases.

The predominately Cree population that resides throughout the Lakeland District once acted as intermediaries in the fur trade in western Canada, buying from tribes to the north, west and south, then selling to the Hudson's Bay Company, usually in trade for goods and supplies. Today, in keeping with the traditions of Aboriginal culture, First Nations and Metis continue to celebrate that culture by hosting a number of annual celebrations and through active participation and involvement in the community.

The First Nations community at Beaver Lake, Cold Lake, Frog Lake, Goodfish Lake, Kehewin and Saddle Lake are among the Lakeland's First Nation communities participating in annual powwow days and other community-driven celebrations throughout the year. Also in close proximity to Lac La Biche is Caslan, home to the near 1,000 residents of the Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement. Located about 50 kilometres southwest of Lac La Biche, the 34,818 hectare Buffalo Lake community is one of eight Metis settlements in Alberta, the only Canadian province where Metis citizens still have a land base. The Kikino Metis Settlement, just a stone's throw away, encompasses nearly 45,000 hectares and currently has a population of just over 1,100.

More information on the Lakeland District, Lac La Biche, the Aboriginal communities and their tourist attractions can be obtained by calling (780) 623-4822 or by

stopping at the information centre at Lac La Biche's west entrance on Highway 55.



District. The most noteworthy of these include what the University of Calgary, after extensive research, now considers the 'mysterious' Anthony Henday who first arrived in 1774, merchant Peter Pond in 1792, geographer Peter Fidler in 1792 and explorer, geographer and fur-trader, David Thompson in 1798.

Fur trading continued early into the 19th century, but the arrival of missionaries from the Roman Catho-



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Lac La Biche: gateway to beautiful Lakeland Provincial Park

The Town of Lac La Biche, often referred to as The Gateway to Lakeland Provincial Park, is located on Highway #55, right in the heart of Alberta's Lakeland District, 93 kilometres east of Athabasca and about 153 kilometres west of Cold Lake. Surrounded by opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, Lac La Biche offers easy access to more than 150 lakes, all located within 60 kilometres of the town centre, and to a variety of wilderness adventures that include fishing, water skiing, camping, birdwatching, hiking, ice-fishing, canoeing, swimming, outdoor photography and all distinctions of in-season hunting. Licences can be purchased for waterfowl, upland bird and both small and big game hunting. Many hunters call the area a "bowman's paradise."

Edmonton is just a two and a half hour drive from Lac La Biche, and that's a bonus that many capital city swimmers, boaters and campers take advantage of all summer long. The popularity of the area also stems from the fact that 70 per cent of the province's white sand beaches are within a fifteen-minute drive from town, many just steps away from the abundant camping areas, motels, hotels and bed and breakfast establishments available to visitors in the Lac La Biche area.

Lakeland Provincial Park, just one of 11 provincial parks in north eastern Alberta, encompasses nearly 60,000 hectares (148,200 acres) of land with virtually every type of environment available in Canada embedded in its structure. From lush green forests to vast marshlands and crystal clear lakes, the area is also very popular and highly recommended by bird watchers from across North America. Now considered the fastest growing outdoor activity on the continent, bird watching takes on a new meaning in Lac La Biche



country. Of the more than 370 species of birds recorded in Alberta, more than 250 are regular visitors to the Lakeland District, which lies in the middle of a major flight path for migrating birds. Bird watchers and outdoor photographers will be thrilled with the opportunities to capture the moment and record the sighting of many otherwise difficult species to locate. These include loons, swans, bald eagles, owls, pelicans, wood warblers, sandhill cranes and dozens of species of waterfowl. More than 40 of the species that regularly visit the Lakeland region remain throughout the year, allowing winter weather enthusiasts great opportunities all year long.

Visitors to Lac La Biche will find an old growth, mixed-wood boreal forest just 10 minutes east of town when they visit nearby Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park. Many of the trees in Sir Winston's forests are more than 200 years old. Located on an island, attached to the mainland by a two-kilometre walkway, the park is also an ideal haven for bird watchers and photographers as well as for campers, picnickers and hikers. In fact, some of the most scenic hiking spots in western Canada can be found throughout the region. Favourite areas to check out include those near Seibert, Pinehurst, Touchwood and Ironwood Lakes.

The population of the Town of Lac La Biche is as flexible as night and day - that's because the actual count of 2,800 citizens more than doubles during business hours when area residents are attending work and children are travelling to school. The ethnic diversity in Lac La Biche is practically "a melting pot of cultures" and is home to a vibrant cultural community that includes First Nations, Metis, French, Ukrainian, Italian, White Russian and Lebanese. That the town has always boasted about the flexibility of its multi-cultural community may come from the fact that the Lac La Biche area was the first in Alberta to be populated by European settlers when they began to arrive in the mid 1700s.

The Lac La Biche Mission, located just a few kilometres northwest of the town, was first established in 1853 by Oblate Missionary Father Rene Reme, is one of the province's most recognized historical sites. Home to Alberta's first sawmill and later to the first printing press, the Mission, which has been partially restored over the years, continues to remain open throughout the months of summer.

A stroll along the lakeshore in the Town of Lac La Biche will lead visitors to the David Thompson Statue, erected in 1993 to commemorate Thompson's arrival in the area 201 years earlier.

Golfers will stop and stare in awe when they see the beautifully manicured landscape at the popular Lac La Biche Golf and Country Club, about 7 kilometres east of town. The course is a challenging one, but if you can escape the sand traps and steer clear of the numerous water hazards, the 18-hole course can be quite rewarding.

Out of town visitors who just want to lay around on the beaches, take in the sun and enjoy some small town friendliness won't be disappointed when they arrive in Lac La Biche. The town council, the local and regional governments and the business community have all gone the extra mile to promote Lac La Biche and the many attractions it offers. And for those of you who are looking for a nice town to raise a family, Lac La Biche is a natural. Both houses and apartments are available for rent and the latest information from local sources say there's also a good selection of quality homes and properties for sale on the market right now. Mobile home owners will find an abundant selection of trailer parks to choose from, many of which are in close proximity to easy lakeshore access.

For more detailed information about Lac La Biche and Alberta's Lakeland District contact Audrey Morrison at the Heart of the Lakeland Office in St. Paul by calling toll free to 1-888-664-4155. Local calls and calls from within Alberta can be made to (780) 664-2913.

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Alberta's Lakeland offers visitors a look into the past

by Ennis Morris

Alberta's Lakeland District, is an ideal place for visitors to rest and relax or to get completely absorbed in the splendour of the wilderness, forests, marshlands and boreal forests that encompass the region. But visitors and newcomers to the Lakeland will soon discover that there's

a great deal more to learn when you take the time to explore this amazing region. Visitors can travel into the Lakeland District via any number of the province's central and northern roadways, each leading to a town, hamlet, Metis Settlement or First Nation community with stories to tell and places to visit. Several of the larger centres in the region, including Athabasca, Lac La Biche and Cold Lake, can be found on Highway 55. St. Paul and Bonnyville are located on Highway 41. Other communities in the Lakeland District include Goodfish Lake (Hwy. 866), Saddle Lake (Hwy. 857), Ashmont (Hwy. 26), Thorhild (Hwy. 18), Boyle (Hwy. 663) and Two Hills (Hwy. 45). Visitors and travellers driving between the Town of Lac La Biche, located in the Heart of the Lakeland, and the provincial capital, Edmonton, will appreciate and enjoy the alternate, but scenic and photogenic drive along Highway 55 through Athabasca, the first stop on their short tour of the Lakeland District.

The Cree Nation, who have occupied either traditional or treaty lands throughout the Lakeland District for more than 3,000 years, call Athabasca the 'Land Of The Whispering Hills'. Located at the Highway 2/55 intersection, about 135 kilometres directly north of Edmonton, Athabasca is a picturesque community nestled up against the 'big bend' in the Athabasca River. Named by the Hudson's Bay Company during the early and prosperous years of the Canadian fur trade, Athabasca's longevity is evident by the many historical sites that have been retained

and preserved in and around the community.

One of the most interesting and intriguing of Alberta's historic regions, Athabasca's most interesting sites include the Brick School House, built in 1913 to serve all ages and grades, and now used to house the town's archives and the well-kept turn-of-the-century styled, Athabasca United Church, built in 1912. The town is also well known because it's the home base for one of western Canada's most recognized schools, Athabasca University, considered to have one of the best distance education programs in the country.

The scenery during the hours drive along Highway 55 from Athabasca to Lac La Biche varies from season to season, but the ripening fall crops and sprawling farm and timberlands never fail to impress first time

travellers.

Lac La Biche, the feature of another article in this regional special about Alberta's Lakeland District, is a travellers treasure, filled with golden opportunities for fun and adventure. One of the most noted historical sites in the Lac La Biche region is the famed Mission, established in 1855 by the Oblate Missionaries, later turned into Indian Residential School and now operated by the Lac La Biche Mission Historical Society. Located about 10 kilometres from the town, the Mission is currently under renovation and open to visitors during the summer months.

Last September 29, popular Lac La Biche

St. Paul, MLA, Paul Langevin arrived in town with good news, the Mission was to receive \$250,000 to help with restorations. The money was part of a Centennial Legacies Grant and one of the first handed out to Alberta communities to aid in their efforts to commemorate the province's 100th birthday in 2005. A second centennial grant that will help in the construction of a new Lakeland Interpretive Centre and Regional Leisure Complex was also announced.

"These projects are good for the community," said Langevin. "Building this interpretive centre and recreation complex has been a priority for the people of Lac La Biche for many years. And the Lac La Biche Mission is an important historic resource worth preserving for the community and for visitors to north eastern Alberta to enjoy."

South of Lac La Biche on Secondary Highway 866 lies Goodfish Lake, the home of Whitefish First Nation (Goodfish) community, who occupy land near the

shores of Whitefish Lake. Saddle Lake, located just a few kilometres south, off Highway 652, is home to the Saddle Lake First Nation and the Saddle Lake Cultural Museum. The facility, a main attraction in the Manitou Khew Centre, is open free to the public and traces local Aboriginal history back to ancient times. The museum, designed to resemble an eagle with wide spread wings, is open weekdays and by special appointment. Tours for groups of all sizes can be arranged.

Cold Lake, as it is today, was granted city status on October 1, 2000, exactly four years to the day after the communities of Cold Lake, Grand Centre and the residential portion of 4-Wing, known as Medley, amalgamated under the one name. The area around Cold Lake, which was once the main trading centre for trappers and fishers and later loggers and farmers who came to make their home in the region, had been inhabited by Canada's Indigenous people for several thousand years before the first European settlers began arriving near the end of the 19th Century.

The area began to flourish after fur traders, returning from excursions up the Beaver River in the late 1800s, reported on the bountiful and beautiful northern furs they had discovered there. It wasn't long after when the Hudson's Bay Company and its rival, the Northwest Company, set up trading posts at nearby Beaver River crossing.

Today, Cold Lake is home to Canada's largest airforce base and to western Canada's largest inland marina. It's also said that there are more underground oil reserves located in the area between Cold Lake and Fort McMurray than there is in the entire Persian Gulf.

Cold Lake Provincial Park is located just five kilometres north of the Cold Lake city limits. A popular nesting site for migratory waterfowl, the park is filled with a forest of spruce and pine and is home to hundreds of species of animals, birds, insects and freshwater life.

The 22-foot high Kinosis Totem Poles that stand along the shores of Cold Lake are the work of Cold Lake First Nation Chief Ovide Jacko, who carved the beautiful symbols of Aboriginal life from northern Alberta cedar. Photographers will recognize the area as one that will deliver beautiful postcard-type pictures with every click of the camera. Alberta's Lakeland District is waiting for you.



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A Tribute to Artists

Ermineskin Tribe to open arts and crafts gallery

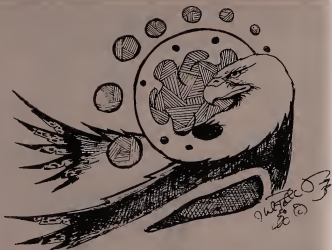
The Ermineskin Tribe of central Alberta is planning to develop and operate an arts and crafts gallery on-reserve in the town of Hobbema, Alberta, approximately 100 kilometres south of Edmonton.

The Ermineskin arts and crafts gallery will consist of a fully functional arts and crafts supply store, and a retail outlet to sell the handcrafted arts products purchased from members. It also plans to market products around the world via internet e-commerce.

This is a \$400,000 project, with a federal government contribution of \$100,000. The gallery has been under development by the Ermineskin Economic Development department since June 2000. The Ermineskin Economic Development department intends to tap into this already rich cottage industry of member-produced arts and crafts.

Ermineskin's long and diverse culture includes its exceptional skill at creating various forms of art and crafts. Members have been trained through family for generations and have maintained their high quality of workmanship.

As the gallery will be located in the town of Hobbema, local artisans will have



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easy access to purchase materials and/or sell finished works of art. As the gallery matures, it will become a major broker of authentic Aboriginal arts and crafts.

The gallery will house a fully stocked material and supply store and a small arts and crafts product outlet. Promotion will be primarily via the Internet. Ermineskin gallery will have an extensive e-commerce web site including artist biographies, Ermineskin community profile, gallery profile and a virtual shopping/art gallery. Potential customers will be able to view 360-degree pictures of the shopping/art gallery and its extensive products on the web site.

A spin off opportunity for the gallery is the development of an arts and craft training centre. This will enable Ermineskin Tribe members to retain and regenerate their arts and crafts skills.

Two new jobs are expected to be created by this project. In addition, it is anticipated that up to 100 jobs will be created indirectly when Ermineskin members become members of the gallery.

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East Coast American Indian Art Show: November 17 - 18

Guatemalan masks, Plains Indian textiles and Pacific Northwest carvings are among the many items on display at the upcoming East Coast American Indian Art Show, which will be held November 17 & 18 at the DC Armory in Washington, D.C.

This show is considered to be one of the largest Indigenous cultural classrooms in the country. Many knowledgeable international exhibitors and Native American artists from both continents will be on hand to talk about and sell American Indian art, Western Paintings, Pre-Columbian & Spanish Colonial art.

Featured antique items on display include a variety of art objects, such as cooking pots, wedding dresses, beaded horse saddles, blankets, and 18th, 19th and 20th century jewelry from such artists as Leo Pobiona (Zuni) and Charles Loloma (Hopi). Loloma was the first Indian artist to do contemporary work and become a world famous jeweller, according to John Krena of "Four Winds Gallery" in Pittsburgh, PA.

"His work, exhibited in such places as Paris, was distinctive. He used materials that were unusual for Native jewelers at the time, including gold and diamonds," said Krena who will also be showing exceptional historic pueblo ceramics from such ceramists as the late Maria Martinez. No sacred items will be for sale or on display.

Featured contemporary artists include New Mexican sculptor Cliff Fragua of New Mexico's Jemez Pueblo.

Fragua is considered one of the foremost contemporary Indian sculptors today. Other artists include Southwest weaver Rose Blueeyes from Toadleana/Two Grey Hills who will demonstrate some of her prize-winning techniques.

This two-day event is sponsored by ATADA (Antique Tribal Arts Dealers Assoc.) member Kim Martindale. It will also feature a series of guest



Diabetes, Continued from page 13

to whites, black adults have a 60 percent higher rate of Type 2 diabetes, and Hispanic adults have a 90 percent higher rate. The prevalence of Type 2 diabetes has tripled in the last 30 years, and much of the increase is due to the dramatic upsurge in obesity. People with a BMI of 30 or greater have a five-fold greater risk of diabetes than people with a normal BMI of 25 or less.

To date, the cost of the DPP is \$174.3 million. The DPP is funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute on Aging, the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, the National Center for Research Resources, the Office of Research on Women's Health, and the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research within the National Institute of Health. Additional funding and support was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indian Health Service, and the American Diabetes Association. The study also is funded in part through a Cooperative Research Development Agreement (CRADA) with Bristol Myers Squibb. Other sources of corporate support include Merck and Company, Merck Medco, Hoechst Marion Roussel, Lifescan, Slimfast, Nike, and Health-O-Meter.

lectures on Native American antiques, including an update on the *United States v. Kornwolf* appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals by Richard Edwards professor of law at the University of Toledo.

This case, still in the courts, concerns the selling of an American Indian headdress and Sioux Indian dance shield to an undercover government agent. For more information, call KR Martindale Show Management at 800-656-9278.



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Solomon King
4th year, OACA
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The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation is proud to support Nadia and Solomon and others like them who are working toward rewarding careers as artists and performers.

Call 1-800-329-9780 for more information on arts programs, the Cultural Projects Program for Aboriginal organizations and the Visual Art Acquisition Program for practicing artists.

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Alberta Trappers' Compensation Program

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Alberta Trappers' Compensation Program provides a framework compensating operators of Registered Fur Management Areas (Trappers) trapping business losses related to industrial activity on RMA's, theft and vandalism, and catches lost to naturally caused fire/fires.

A seven member board manages the program with members appointed from:

Alberta Fur Products Association (AFPA) • Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) • Alberta Mts. Trapping Community • Alberta Treaty Indian Trapping Community • ATCO Electric • Independent Chairman selected by the stakeholders.

In 1997, the stakeholders in the program agreed that the Alberta Trappers' Association (A.T.A.) would administer the program that was established by the Government of Alberta in 1981. Industry, trappers and government jointly share funding of this program.

The role of the Board is to: • Review program objectives and make recommendations to program participants for adjustments to compensation for payment schedules, etc. • Review, adjust and settle trapper claims. • Mediate and resolve claim related disputes. • Review program funding, insurance/reimbursements, arrange for audits, submit annual reports. • Perform other duties as required by the stakeholders. • Promote the program, communicate with agencies, industry and the public.

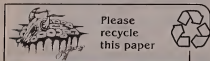
The program has five claim categories:

1. Damage to trapper assets
2. Theft, vandalism and arson
3. Temporary disruptions to trapping operations
4. Long-term loss of income, caused by industrial disturbances
5. Trapper catches lost to naturally caused forest fires (hunting from trappers)

For claims that fall into the temporary disruptions and damaged assets categories the trapper must first negotiate directly with the company responsible. Should the last even the claim may be submitted through the district Fish and Wildlife Services officer to the Trappers' Compensation Board for consideration. All theft and vandalism must be promptly reported to the R.C.M.P. and a file number provided to the Conservation Officer, who then prepares and forwards the claim to the board. Requests for compensation must be made on the approved claim form and the proper documentation should be attached which includes:

- Photographs - especially for theft, vandalism, arson, and trapping disruptions, etc.
- Description of equipment stolen and estimated value of items.
- Dates of disturbances and losses.
- Names of companies and others involved i.e. suspects.
- Conservation Officers reports/recommendations.

If you have any questions about this program or wish to make a claim, please do not hesitate to contact the Alberta Trappers' Compensation Board (780-349-6626) or the nearest Conservation Officer for information/assistance.



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Resource Development

Alberta First Nations ready to enter bison industry

Six east central Alberta First Nations are preparing to enter the bison industry. The project involves six First Nations (Heart Lake, Beaver Lake, Goodfish Lake, Kehewin, Cold Lake and Frog Lake) acquiring a herd of approximately 100 wood bison from Elk Island National Park and includes four phases – a bull breeding operation, cow/calf operation, providing stock to other First Nations and Parks Canada, and meat marketing.

Northern Lakes Wood Bison was originally incorporated in August 2000 to commercially ranch bison. The six First Nations partners have concluded an agreement to acquire a herd of wood bison from Elk Island National Park. The partners have also entered into a land lease agreement with Heart Lake First Nation for access to 10 sections of land located on the Heart Lake reserve. This land will be used for the bison.

This is a \$3 million project, with a federal government contribution of \$250,000. The First Nations are contributing a total of \$2 million in assets and cash. The site at Heart Lake First Nation is ideal for the proposed operation. It has enough land for the current operation and prospective growth. The location will



BUFFALO HUNTER. © CHRISTOPHER HARVEY CHAMBAUD 2000.

be maintained as close to a natural setting as possible with enough land for the animals to graze and wooded area for shade and wind protection. It offers a wide variety of topography and vegetation.

The Northern Lakes Wood Bison project is an excellent opportunity to diversify the First Nations economies and has significant potential for success. The bison industry is a growth industry with particularly great potential in the bison breeding operation.

It is anticipated the demand for bison meat products will also grow significantly over the next few years.

Approximately 65 jobs (full time, part time and seasonal) are expected to be created by the project, 40 of which are earmarked for First Nations members.

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Alberta-Pacific on PAR with other Canadian companies

The importance of having positive, long-term relationships with Aboriginal people has long been an essential part of Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.'s business. Now, the company is one of eight organizations across Canada that are taking part in the first year of a program that allows them to assess their Aboriginal Relations programs against nationally accepted criteria and gain recognition for their efforts.

The Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program is the first of its kind in the world. It was developed through the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, and Alberta-Pacific's Director of Aboriginal Affairs, Sandra Cardinal, was a member of the PAR Steering Committee that started developing the program two years ago.

She says the PAR program was designed to allow companies of any size assess their Aboriginal relations programs in four general areas: Employment, Business Development, Individual Capacity Development and Community Relations.

"The PAR program helps companies assess themselves in terms of their activities and goals so they can achieve sustainable Aboriginal relations and provide them with feedback from communities," says Sandra. "We also wanted to recognize the companies that are doing good work in Aboriginal relations. The PAR hallmark helps them tell the public that they are committed to working with Aboriginal people in their businesses."

With more and more businesses across the country recognizing the importance of good Aboriginal relations programs, the PAR program comes at a perfect time to help promote respectful, long-term activities that benefit Aboriginal people.

All organizations participating in PAR receive a hallmark that they can use in their corporate communications, signifying their commitment to Aboriginal relations. Sandra says it isn't easy to get into the program. Before even registering, a company must demonstrate their honest commitment to PAR.

"You have to show that you are sincere in establishing sustainable Aboriginal relations within your business," she says. "That is the first step toward receiving a hallmark."

Once a commitment is attained, companies conduct a self-audit of their Aboriginal relations program. That audit is verified by the National Quality Institute, an independent, not-for-profit organization.

Upon successful verification of an internal audit, the registration hallmark turns into a hallmark at a bronze, silver, or gold level of achievement.

Bronze shows that the organization has identified goals and action plans. Silver indicates those plans have been implemented and are demonstrating results. A gold level means that the organization has achieved leadership in Aboriginal relations and is sustaining it over time. The levels are reassessed each year for continued participation in the program.

Sandra says she has high hopes for the company's achievement level, but more importantly, the audit will provide valuable information for improving its Aboriginal relations programs.

"We don't want to do this program just to be able to brag about it," she says. "It is designed to give us feedback from the communities so that we know if we are doing the right things to help them. That's really what this is all about, is helping the communities. We're not going to solve all the problems, but there are things we can do to positively impact them."

As a member of a local Aboriginal community, Sandra says she wanted to make sure the program was meeting community needs as well as corporate ones.

"I tried to look at the program as a community member, to make sure it represented their viewpoints," she says. "I believe it does, and what we hear from communities throughout this process will be very important for us."

Representatives from the National Quality Institute will visit Alberta-Pacific in October to verify the results of their internal assessment.

For more information about any aspect of Alberta-Pacific's practices and programs, call 1-800-661-5210 or (780) 525-8000.



17th Anniversary, Continued from page 5

Moser and the staff at *Alberta Native News* would like to acknowledge the many individuals who have contributed to the success of the newspaper over the years. They also recognize and appreciate their many advertisers, subscribers and readers whose participation has enabled the venture to succeed.

"We are always delighted to get letters and comments from our readers," assured the publisher. "If you have an event you'd like to see covered in our newspaper, call us at (780) 421-7966 and remember to allow for a little lead time so we can do the job right."

Alberta Native News is always open to comments, suggestions and letters to the editor. Freelance writers and artists are also urged to send their material in for consideration.

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Settling old claim opens door to new opportunities for Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Members of the Sturgeon Lake First Nation, along with Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, attended a recent ceremony to mark the final settlement of an outstanding grievance dating back to 1906, when timber revenue rights on reserve lands were taken away from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation.

"Our First Nation has been waiting for years to settle this outstanding claim. It took years of negotiations, but today we are celebrating the payment of a long-standing debt," said Sturgeon Lake Chief Earl Ermine.

The total compensation provided to Sturgeon Lake First Nation under the settlement is approximately \$4.5 million to cover revenue losses from the timber lands and the cost associated with researching and negotiating the claim. The settlement was ratified by First Nation members in a vote earlier this year.

"This settlement not only rights an historical wrong, but also opens up expanded economic opportunities for Sturgeon Lake First Nation that will help strengthen the wellbeing of its community," said Minister Nault. This agreement shows clearly there is a shared desire to establish a new relationship between Canada and First Nations with mutual re-



spect and understanding. The results of such partnerships are benefiting First Nations and all Canadians."

The Sturgeon Lake First Nation is located near Shellbrook, about 50 kilometres northwest of Prince Albert. There are about 2,000 registered members of the Sturgeon Lake First Nation.

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Discovery Harbour Marina to expand

The federal government has announced a \$125,000 investment in the Campbell River Indian Band for the expansion of the Discovery Harbour Marina. The Campbell River Indian Band, successful owner and operator of the Discovery Harbour Marina for the past 12 years, is also investing \$376,500 in this expansion.

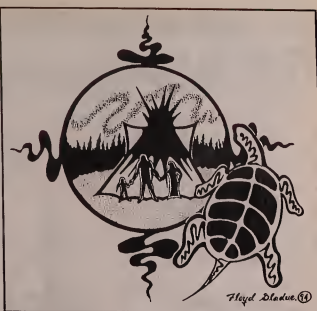
"The Campbell River Indian Band over recent years, has put a lot of effort into developing the waterfront and upland area, and we are very pleased that the Government of Canada (Indian Affairs) is willing to work with us by making this investment," stated Chief Aubrey Roberts. "The benefits of this expansion program will undoubtedly be shared throughout the entire region. The preparation will begin immediately with construction likely in the fall."

The expansion will allow the marina to meet the increasing demands of large harbour traffic in the Campbell River area. It will involve a 1400 foot extension of mooring space to the existing marina, allowing approximately 700 vessels to dock. The expansion will also include the construction of a floating marina office and upgrades to power and administration services.

It is estimated that this initiative will create four to six temporary jobs during the construction phase, and two to three full and part-time jobs when the construction is complete. The Discovery Harbour Marina expansion will provide long-term marina operations and business management training to Campbell River Indian Band members in addition to short-term opportunities to develop general construction skills.

Bosco Homes, Continued from page 12

Canada, when it comes to providing help for at-risk children," emphasized Dr. Gus Rozycki. "When the media brings to our attention sensational coverage of children's egregious behaviours, such as a gang of kids killing a schoolmate or an eight year old calmly shooting a neighbour, there are public demands that something be done about such kids. When we hear about the discovery of a child's body or that a child's body parts are discovered strewn about the country side, or when we see children on national television, with plastic bags filled with gasoline attached to their faces, there is a chorus of citizens demanding that something be done for such children. Yet, those who work with or on behalf of children in crisis often face a less than enthusiastic public or media in times between such headlines. The former would just as soon have the 'problems' simply go away and the latter would rather engage in sensationalism than raise the plight of our children to a higher plane. If we believe that children are our future, then we can not allow society at large, or the political leaders to ignore our children's plight." Social agencies need help. They need volunteers to be a friend to a child, to help



with a special project, to help find needed resources. Old folk wisdom says 'talk is cheap'. One cannot save a drowning child with good advice from the safety of the shore; if someone does not jump in and get wet the child will drown. Yet, if statistics don't lie, why is more not done to help at-risk kids? Pundits claim that 'throwing money at a problem won't change anything, but the fact is throwing money at the problem will indeed go a long way towards addressing children's needs.'

For more information about the Bosco Homes Society or to learn how you can help, contact Carolyn McKenzie at (780) 440 - 0708, Ext. 247.

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United Dene gathering to focus on uranium mining contamination

Navajo environmental justice activists have recently departed the southwest of the United States headed to Saskatchewan for an historical meeting with the Dene Aboriginal communities. Even though over two thousand miles divide both tribal groups, they share the same Athabaskan language and effects of uranium mining contamination. The Dine, meaning "The People" in the language of the Navajo is similar in meaning to the Dene of Canada.

Representing three environmental organizations on the Navajo reservation, Dine Citizens Against Ruining the Environment, Eastern Navajo Dine Against Uranium Mining and Utah Navajo Downwinders will be travelling to Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan. They will take part in a week long meeting hosted by the Hatchet Lake Dene First Nation. Ten Dene communities from throughout the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan are expected to attend.

The United Dene Gathering will focus on uses of traditional land, education, health, culture and uranium. Together, the Dine and Dene will discuss uranium issues and strategies for cleanup and compensation to the miners, millers and communities exposed to years of toxic and radioactive contamination from uranium mining.

"This is a human rights issue at its worst. Both the United States and Canada to this day have failed to adequately clean up and take care of this issue that has caused the deaths of many of these community



peace country, deer.

© Christopher Harvey, Chomboard, 99

members," says Sayo'kla Kindness, an Oneida Indian organizer with the Indigenous Mining Campaign Project, a partnership between the Indigenous Environmental Network and Project Underground. Sayo'kla just returned from an IEN international Indigenous environmental justice conference in British Columbia where uranium mining and energy issues were discussed.

The Bush administration plans to expand nuclear power plants as a growing energy resource. Nuclear power depends on uranium for fuel. Highly radioactive spent fuel rods from these nuclear power plants

are destined for storage in Indian lands such as the Western Shoshone in Nevada, the Skull Valley Goshute Band of Shoshone in Utah and the Dene and Cree lands in Saskatchewan.

Uranium mining has devastated both the Dine and Dene communities. It has left behind a legacy of abandoned uranium mines, many of which continue to contaminate ground water and the surrounding area releasing deadly radiation into the environment. They have high incidents of lung cancer, arthritis, asthma and many other health problems that can be directly contributed to the mines.

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B.C. lifts ban on bear hunting

by John Copley

It didn't take British Columbia's newly elected Liberal government long to rid the province of its February 8, 2001 pledge to initiate a three-year moratorium on grizzly bear hunting in the province. It took even less time for the London, England-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) to condemn the move, after having spent more than three years campaigning on behalf of the bears and the 93 British travel companies who had backed the agency's stop-the-bear-hunt proposal. The announcement means that about half of the province will be open for grizzly bear hunters later this fall. A spring bear hunt will also be allowed in 2002, though the regions open to hunters will be smaller. Some areas will remain under temporary and/or indefinite bans. These include Vancouver Island, Cariboo, South Chilcotin, Toba-Bute, North Cascades, South Selkirk, Peace River, Squamish-Lillooet, Stein Nahatlatch, Omineca, Central Coast, Skeena and Kettle Granby. The EIA called the move by Campbell's government "an act of political narrow mindedness."

But Joyce Murray, B.C.'s Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, defended her July 21 announcement to lift the ban on grizzly hunting, saying the Liberals would not endorse political decisions made by the former NDP government.

"The blanket moratorium on grizzly bear hunting was imposed by the previous government for political reasons and was inconsistent with the wildlife branch's own analysis," Murray said in a recent press release. "We made a commitment to the people that we would replace the blanket moratorium with a proper peer review by scientists and biologists, and with regional moratoriums where appropriate. We are honouring that commitment today." She added that she "thinks it's important, particularly for conservation decisions, that our decisions are not based on politics or on interest group pressure, either from the hunter side or the non-hunting side."

The EIA says it will take up to three years for a proper grizzly count to be conducted and predicts B.C.'s change of mind will cause them a loss of credibility on the international stage.

"The only beneficiary (of the government's decision) is the tiny grizzly hunting community," said EIA Bear Campaigner Martin Powell. The EIA has already begun an appeal process with the United Nations saying that B.C. has broken the rules set forth under the Convention on International Treaty in Endangered Species, a treaty that bans the export of endangered species and/or their body parts.

"We want a ban on all exports of grizzly trophies so foreign hunters won't be allowed to take their trophies out of the country with them," said Powell. "Then they will have no reason to go there to hunt."



Tourism operators are also concerned, as are First Nations groups whose traditional land is often invaded by hunters seeking to fill their tag and environmental and animal groups are worried about what will be left for future generations. There is widespread disagreement with current government figures that put the province's grizzly count at nearly 13,000. Most believe that no more than 5,000 grizzly bears currently roam B.C.'s wilderness.

During the past year more than 100 British and an equal amount of B.C.-based tourism-type companies have called for and supported the EIA's quest to have the grizzly bear hunt stopped. They said the hunt was hurting the province's image and damaging its reputation as a preferred tourist destination.

Last year both resident and out-of-province hunters killed 243 grizzlies in B.C. Nearly 3,000 permits are sought each year; 250 foreign licences are issued on a draw basis. The grizzly bear is North America's slowest reproducing land mammal and its disappearing habitat has been a growing concern for millions of British Columbians, especially over the last decade. The animal is shot only for its hide as the meat is seldom eaten.

Minister Murray says a scientific panel of independent experts chosen by the province will review and comment on grizzly management practices in an effort to ensure public confidence in the province's grizzly bear conservation strategy and research. The panel will have authority to receive scientific submissions, and its recommendations will be made public.

"Where grizzly bear populations are healthy, a carefully managed hunt will be permitted. Conservation science will dictate which moratoriums will remain in place."

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Salute to the North

Mackenzie Pipeline Project nears approval while some Natives remain leery

by John Copley

When a consortium that includes the four biggest and richest oil companies in Canada get together to work on a project it's a major event where one of two things are possible: either they go ahead with their intended project, or they don't. But when you are talking about shipping expensive oil from the Arctic to distribution areas in the southern regions of the continent, a lot more comes into play. For instance, the ears and pencils of the competition get sharper and before you know it, the bidding war is on.

In the red corner, and representing Canadian industry and exploration, the consortium of Imperial Oil, Conoco Canada, Shell Canada and Mobil Oil Canada. In the blue corner, and representing almost everywhere else but Canada, the consortium of Phillips, British Petroleum-Amoco and Exxon-Mobil.

This will truly be a heavyweight title match, and right now the odds are in favour of both the project becoming a reality, and the winner by financial decision and the ability to think and act quickly, the rivals. But some say that the real losers are going to be the environment, the future of the north and more importantly, the traditional way of life for the Inuit, Dene and Inuvialuit peoples who live there and who depend on the Arctic's natural environment to remain intact, free of liens and encumbrances.

"American interests in this venture are tremendously high and you can bet there's a lot of pressure, political and otherwise, being put on the Bush administration for expediency - the whole world knows they always like to be first," said Terry Denchey, a Metis trapper and part-time resident of Yellowknife, in a recent interview with *Alberta Native News*. "Remember last year when I told you it was just a matter of time before this region would be swarming with industry executives - well that time is here now. The hotel rooms are already difficult to get; you can almost feel the tides of change approaching."

A couple of months ago we brought you up to date on the situation involving the Canadian consortium, the Aboriginal communities that the proposed pipeline would affect and the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), initialized by all but two Aboriginal groups who have a stake in the pipeline project. Today, one group openly opposes the deal and instead is continuing in its quest to negotiate and work with government to secure oil royalties from any pipeline related venture that may take place down the road. That group is the Deh Cho. Another group, representing Sahtu, is backing interests that want to see 100 percent of the pipeline project in Aboriginal hands.

More than 250 people converged on Ft. Simpson, NWT., in June 2000 to sign an MOU that would link all of the Aboriginal peoples in the region to a deal that would see them share in natural gas revenues. At the time much ado was made about the



eagerness of northern Aboriginal people to get involved in the deal. But since that time new questions have been raised. Elders have expressed their concern about the environment and what will be left when all of the construction has been completed, the oil wells dug and everyone gone back to their comfortable homes.

"I don't know that people care so much about jobs on the pipeline," Trout Lake Elder Joe Punch told media recently seeking Native opinion on northern development. "What worries them is what it will do to the moose and fish."

Roy Fabian was involved in discussions during Thomas Berger's inquiry into the possibility of a pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley three decades ago; he was against the idea then and according to recent media reports he hasn't changed his mind.

"I don't think the Creator meant for us to take what is in the ground and pollute the environment," he said recently to *Edmonton Journal* reporter Ed Struzik, who is on a 2,500 kilometre trek through the north this summer to investigate "what will be gained and lost if a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline is constructed."

"For the Dene," continued Fabian, "land is everything. That should be our first and only consideration. Where will we be in five or ten years when the development is over and there is no more need for workers up here? We can't lose our connection to the land."

The same sentiments have been expressed by numerous Aboriginal groups and individuals since the pipeline project began to look like a reality earlier this summer. The majority of the people interviewed about the pipeline prospect, however, including Aboriginal people who live in the area, are in favour of the project, but concerned about the aftereffects if the project isn't managed properly.

The heavy news coverage that the Mackenzie Pipeline issue is receiving might have people thinking that the project is a given, and that it might start as early as tomorrow afternoon. That's not the case. Negotiations are still taking place between Canadian Aboriginal leaders, communities, business and government. The rival bid by the consortium trying to force ahead with the Alaska Pipeline Project by taking advantage of Canadian indecision, will however, add a great deal of pressure to the decision-makers.

The last word here goes to Toronto-based lawyer Chris Reid. He represents the only group really opposed to the idea of the pipeline project, the Deh Cho. Not convinced that ownership is in the best interest of his client, Reid says there are other ways to benefit and many ways to lose.

"The Aboriginal people could end up with close to nothing after taxes," he said in recent comments to national media. "It (ownership) doesn't pass the test in a lot of ways. As it stands now, the Deh Cho have no control over environmental monitoring. They do not share in any of the royalties."

Reid is advising his client to make a deal with the federal government that ensures royalty payments on every barrel of oil that is shipped through the pipeline.

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Northern outfitting business will boost local economy

Chief Clifford McKay of the Pine Creek First Nation and Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development recently announced the funding of an economic development project that will lead to local employment opportunities for Pine Creek First Nation residents in northwestern Manitoba.

The project will support the creation of hunting, fishing and outfitting services which will operate at Pine Creek First Nation. Pine Creek Outfitting Services, a business owned by Anthony Nepinak, will create three full-time and two part-time positions. Mr. Nepinak has been a licensed guide for the past sixteen years.

"I am very proud of Anthony and of this achievement in our community," said Chief McKay. "The

establishment of his business will help us to better meet the needs of visitors to the area, as well as to provide jobs and experience in the tourism and outfitting sector for our community members. It is an excellent opportunity with tremendous benefits for both visitors and residents alike."

Two cabins will be constructed to provide accommodation for hunting and fishing clients. Six non-resident deer and bear hunting licenses have been purchased for the initial season. This initiative has the support of the Pine Creek First Nation Chief and Council, who have consented to the use of five acres of reserve land. This project also provides potential for future expansion and increased employment opportunities for community residents.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) provided \$25,590 in funds for the project through its Resource Acquisition Initiative (RAI). The RAI assists communities to acquire natural resource permits and licences by funding resource-sector and related business opportunities. The balance of the \$102,000 total project costs, was provided through company assets and commercial financing.

Pine Creek First Nation is located about 437 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg and has an on-reserve population of approximately 976 residents.



Christopher James Lambard, 2002.

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A real treat: traditional goose supper

by Xavier Kataquapit

I had a real treat this week. Some friends of mine invited me over for a traditional Cree goose supper. I haven't had goose for a long time and it was a real pleasure to dine on one of my favourite meals.

Most people think of Canada geese as birds that fly in a "V" formation while honking on their journey north in the spring and south in the fall. For my people, the Cree on the James Bay coast, the Canada goose has been very important in regards to our survival. Since the dawn of time we Cree have been sustained by the Canada goose. It is a large bird and it is very strong. Geese fly thousands of miles and they do so at a very high altitude.

I have taken many geese in my life from my place in blinds along the James Bay coast. I know how to hunt geese, pluck their feathers, clean them and even cook them. Hunting geese is not easy. It takes a lot of preparation and experience to head into the wilderness on a goose hunt.

My favourite meal of goose is one cooked over an open fire. This is accomplished by plucking and cleaning a fresh goose and then cutting it straight down the middle to split it open. The split goose is then pierced with a thick, peeled wooden branch which is stuck in the ground and positioned over an open fire. It is important to cook the goose over a bed of hot coals and a fire that has low flames. It is also necessary to keep an eye on the cooking goose and to make sure to turn it, so that it does not burn but cooks thoroughly. The heart and gizzard are also speared onto a branch to cook along side the goose. These are considered a delicacy by my people. I love goose roasted over an open fire. Within an hour the goose is cooked and ready to be eaten. It is a very brown meat and when cooked over an open fire, it almost tastes like roast beef. When we eat goose on the land like this it is enjoyed with bannock also cooked over an open fire on a stick and of course tea.

Many people still smoke geese. This is predominately done in the spring. Smoked goose is delicious. People who are serious about smoking geese do a lot of them in one time in a wigwam. I recall when I was younger that often I would see people smoking racks of geese inside their wigwams usually situated at the back of their homes.

Smoked goose is like beef jerky. It is another one of my favourite wild meats. The goose meal I had the other night was cooked in a roast pan in an oven.



Potatoes and onions were added to the roast pan to soak up the juices of the goose. My favourite cut from a goose is the leg. I also enjoy the gizzard and heart. One big goose can serve three to four people for supper and contrary to what most people believe, it is not at all greasy or oily. I prefer the spring goose, which has a lot more meat on it over the goose taken in the fall.

We Cree use very basic and cooking methods. We like the taste of the wild meat of the goose, moose, caribou and rabbit. Spices are more or less foreign to us except for salt and pepper of course. We prefer to eat these meats on the land and cooked over an open fire but often that is not possible.

To tell you the truth I can hardly wait until my friends invite me over for another traditional Cree goose supper.



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
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Celebrating Culture

Homeland

by Keith Secola

Produced by Native Americans Music/Akina Records
review by John Copley

Keith Secola is a successful musician, songwriter and singer who's been making music for the multitudes since the early 1980s. His performances have been shared in bars, concert halls, schools and Native American gatherings and even though the burden attached to being known as a "Native Band" has kept him from the Bob Dylan and Neil Diamond-type of worldwide glory and fame, his business sense and his direction in life has allowed him to maintain both a busy concert tour schedule and the time to produce four CD's since 1990.

His latest CD release, *Homeland*, distributed by Akina Records and produced by Native Americana Music, contains 24 songs, but lists only 23. The final recording on the CD, *Fry Bread*, has special significance both to Secola and to the several million Native Americans that give the artist his inspiration and his drive.

"Fry bread is just that, fried bread," Secola said in a January 2000 interview with WHY-FM, Philadelphia radio host Terry Gross. "Fried bread has actually become a symbol of the tenacity of survival that Native Americans had to endure during the 1920s."

Secola turned his name into a headline when he began handing out pieces of the bannock-styled bread as special prizes during his concert tours. He also made international fame - in Canada and the United States, when in 1992 he released his very popular *NDN Cars*, a song that quickly became known as the Native American Pop Anthem.

Homeland, however, is somewhat different than Secola's other releases. First, the album is actually a soundtrack for a film of the same name and second, it's totally instrumental, except for the hidden Fry Bread number at the end of music cut #28, the last song on the album. The music on *Homeland* is catchy, laid-back and easy to listen to. Ideally suited for those who prefer a soft, subtle background in their lives, *Homeland* takes the listener on a journey that captures both the essence of the mystical flute and the beautifully mastered twang-factor of Secola's story-telling guitar.

Like the movie that it was written for, *Homeland* will have a different meaning to different people. It can inspire, elate, sadden and elevate. The twenty-four instrumental tracks featuring flute, guitar and percussion by Keith Secola provide a rich audible environment for the film. The music contains new material such as *House Comes Down a Road on a Hill* and the poignant *Dream Still Alive*. The CD also includes new versions of older Secola tunes, including a dance mix of perhaps his best known song, the wacky, humorous and upbeat *NDN Cars*. Like the rich and engaging film by Jillann Spitzmiller and Hank Rogerson that weaves together the stories of four Lakota Indian families from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Secola's songs are illuminating and unsurpassed in story-telling quality.

Homeland, the film, was shot over the course of three years as it follows a spiritual leader, a grandmother, an artist and a community activist. Set against the stunning back drop of the Northern Plains, the film reminds us all of the power of family, the immense spirit of the natural world and the healing properties of humor and faith.

Homeland, the CD, does the same. The music, beautifully mixed and mastered, leads the listener down a path of perseverance and wisdom, the latter a necessary ingredient in the recipe called success - and that's something Keith Secola is familiar with.

"One of the keys to success in the music business," explained Secola in his WHY-FM radio interview, "is understanding your limitations and knowing how to work within them. Native American music is relatively new on the national and international scene and to succeed, business sense is a prerequisite."

Secola is an accomplished musician who first realized that he could understand and play music when he joined a school marching band in northern Minnesota more than 25 years ago. His first instrument was the trombone. His first guitar, a Gibson, was purchased about 20 years ago but in the last several years his instrument of choice has been the flute. Like Dylan and Diamond, Secola's music is inspired and influenced by traditional Native American music - but he has the advantage of being Native American.

Homeland is the perfect addition to your home CD collection or as that "special" gift you've been waiting to pass along. Information about Secola and other Akina artists can be obtained by writing to Box 1595, Tempe, Arizona, 85280 or by calling (480) 303-0655.

HOMELAND



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CyberSchool,

Continued from page 15

"It's really quite simple," explained Sacher. "Through advances in technology, online education takes place through the Internet. Instructors may be living in major centres like Calgary or Edmonton, yet they are instructing your students in remote outlying areas. Since instructors have the opportunity to stay in a major centre, the accessibility and availability of quality instructors is multiplied many times. A cyber environment allows students to work at their own pace. In situations where family or social concerns may exist, students have the opportunity to work

independently in a safe and flexible environment. Parents who often move from location to location can have their students enrolled in a cyber-school without fear of losing any academic time."

Students who are active in cultural group activities or on sports teams can enrol in a cyber program and still maintain their academic status. "A Cyber program also offers significant benefits to Adult Upgrading students," continued Sacher. "This program also allows families to stay together, while the student(s) obtain their course requirements. Students who traditionally leave reserves to do UCEPP programs may now choose to remain on the reserve as they upgrade their courses for college entrance."

Sunchild CyberSchool is an affordable education alternative. "Students who wish to register with us on a part-time basis," added Sacher, "may arrange to buy services from our school. This option allows students to stay within their home school environment and take the required courses through our school."

"What do you need to get started? What technical requirements must be in place before one can participate in a Sunchild Cyber Program?"

"First, each participating school must have access to the internet," explained Sacher. "In addition, com-

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by Helen Blatch

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puters utilized in the instruction of a cyber program should have minimum requirement of 750 megabytes of free space on the hard drive, 32 megabytes of RAM, at least a 166 MHz processor, CD ROM capacity, a sound card and a minimum 28.8k modem card. Computers will also require either a Macintosh with a minimum operating system of 7.61 or a Windows 95 (minimum) operating system."

The implementation of the Sunchild CyberSchool begins this fall and registrations are already underway. There are various ways to access information, get answers to your questions and even register your child, or your school, with the program.

Contact either Mr. Nelson Daychief, the Director of Education for the Sunchild First Nations School administration, or Mr. Martin Sacher, the school's Program Coordinator. Calls can be made to either of these educators at (408) 872-0587. To contact Mr. Daychief on the internet use his email at: administration@sunchild.net. Mr. Sacher can be contacted via email directed to sacher@sunchild.net. Make sure you check out the CyberSchool homepage on the web at www.scschool.com. You'll find valuable information and a registration form at that address.

The development of a provincial online consortium directed by participating First Nations Schools, designed to provide quality online programming for Alberta's First Nations students, is underway.



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under the northern sky

Pitter patter of rain
brings warm memories

by Xavier Kataquapit

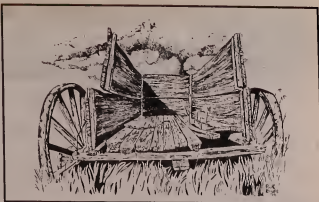
I am listening to the rain fall outside my open window. The wet weather is a welcome change from the oppressive heat wave we have had to deal with recently. The sound of the rain brings back warm memories of my community, Attawapiskat on the James Bay coast. For my people the rain is another part of the natural environment that we live with. It is not hard for us to be out in wet conditions. I have memories of travelling out on the land and staying for days in prospector tents during rainy weather on fishing or hunting trips. In fact people on the James Bay coast look forward to wet weather.

Constant rain raises water levels on the rivers, which we use to move about on the land. These rivers are like highways to us and allow us to roam far inland. Higher water levels make it easier to travel over shallow rapids or streams. The more water that falls the higher the rivers and lakes rise and that means better and safer passage for our freighter canoes. Rising river levels are also a good opportunity for people to gather fire wood during this time of year. During the summer and fall my people travel far inland on the rivers to cut trees and then pull them in booms back to the community. This wood provides heat for the winter.

As a young boy in my community I recall playing with my friends in the rain. Wet weather seldom kept us inside. Rainy days added to our excitement and any outdoor activities we were involved in. On very wet days we devised a solution to riding our bikes around town. We put on full length rubber hip waders, which were normally used for travelling on the freighter canoe and fishing, to ride gleefully around in the rain. It was great fun to ride through the deep puddles of water in the midst of a downpour. Somehow we never did quite work the system out so that the hip waders kept us completely dry. We still arrived home soaking wet.

I also remember travelling out on the land with my family for picnics when my parents had free time. Even when we knew there was rain in the forecast, we still went out. Getting wet is a normal part of being on the land. To keep dry on these wet picnics we set up prospector tents or lean to shelters. We also built a fire. Mom made her bannock and barbecued goose while dad tended to the fire.

Out on the land during a heavy rain and bad storm we huddled inside our prospector tents or lean-tos and spent a lot of time talking to each other. We also drank hot tea and ate mom's fantastic bannock. At night as we all lay under our blankets we drifted off to sleep with the comforting pitter patter of the rain on our canvas roof, happy that we were warm and dry.



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Economic Development

First Nation casino property receives reserve designation

Property belonging to the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation received reserve designation earlier this summer, becoming the third urban reserve in Saskatchewan's most northern city.

This newest reserve in the city is home to the Northern Lights Casino, which is owned by the 12 First Nations of the Prince Albert Grand Council. The 1600 seat casino has become a prime tourist attraction over the past two years.

"The members of our First Nation have had a long and successful partnership with the people of Prince Albert, and we begin a new chapter with the reserve designation of the Northern Lights Casino land. The



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Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and the City of Prince Albert can take great pride in this mutually beneficial relationship," said Susan Custer, Chief of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.

"Over the past 19 years since seeing the first urban reserve in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan First Nations have demonstrated innovation and created scores of possibilities for their members as well as non-First Nations residents of adjacent communities. Urban reserves are the springboard to dozens of jobs, training and business opportunities," said Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

"Prince Albert residents have seen themselves over the last two decades that urban re-

serves can provide many benefits to First Nations members and non-First Nations people alike. Working closely with First Nations and the federal government to set up urban reserves and foster the opportunities which flow from them makes us all winners," said Don Cody, Mayor of Prince Albert.

This marks Saskatchewan's 18th urban reserve, the first having been created in Prince Albert. Other urban reserves have been established in Yorkton, Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, Fort Qu'Appelle and other smaller communities. Urban reserves are parcels of land within an urban community which are set aside for the use and benefit of a First Nation. Reserve status is given after the First Nation and urban municipality work out fee arrangements for municipal services, levies or grants in lieu and other issues of mutual concern.

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Store upgrades increase access to modern services

The Pasquayak Business Development Corporation (PBDC), owned by the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN), has purchased and upgraded equipment for two grocery stores located in The Pas, Manitoba with financial assistance from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

The Pas IGA and The Pas Food Town are updating their store equipment to ensure that their customer base receives efficient service which is tailored to shoppers' changing needs. Purchases include such items as scanners, computers and upgraded cash registers.

These two stores provide community members with a total of 56 employment opportunities.

"The upgrades to the Food Town and IGA food stores is an excellent opportunity for the Opaskwayak Cree Nation to continue to improve its existing operations," said Chief Frank J. Whitehead. "It is a wonderful example of our community's continued commitment to progress and independence, especially in the area of economic development."

"As we continue to work on new business projects or upgrade what we already have, we are fortunate to have a positive working relationship with the department," said Glen Ross, CEO and President of the Pasquayak Business Development Corporation. "The contributions from the Economic Development program at INAC have helped a great deal in the modernization of our operations. We look forward to many more successes with their support."

"I want to congratulate the Pasquayak Business Development Corporation and the Opaskwayak Cree Nation on these economic development success stories," said Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. "OCN has proven once again that it is a strong, viable First Nation with a good history of commercial success. The community should be very proud of their accomplishments."



INAC provided a \$40,000 contribution from the department's Economic Development Opportunity Fund (EDOF). The EDOF program provides "equity gap" funding to eligible First Nations and Inuit community Economic Development Organizations. The objective is to help them attract joint venture partners or secure conventional debt financing to take advantage of a business opportunity. The First Nation provided an additional \$120,000 towards the project through cash and commercial financing.

PBDC is a corporate structure mandated to lead the development of a sound economic base to achieve progress and independence for the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. PBDC has an excellent management record and can provide the core administrative skills necessary for the growth and survival of the ventures.

The primary target market for these two stores will consist of the five Swampy Cree First Nation communities and the immediate and surrounding areas. The secondary target market will include the towns of The Pas, the RM of Kelsey, Cormorant, Wanless and Snow Lake.

The Opaskwayak Cree Nation is located 620 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg and has approximately 2,600 on-reserve members.

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Expansion planned for Players Golf Course

Players Golf Course Ltd., wholly owned by Shawano-Wapunong Building Inc. and South East Resource Development Council (SERDC), is expanding and improving its facility with financial assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Players Golf Course is located on approximately 32 hectares of land adjacent to the Winnipeg Airport. The facility includes a nine-hole professionally designed course, a restaurant, a pro-shop, a separate driving range, ample parking and three separate tee areas. Planned improvements include increasing the size of current sand traps; upgrading fairways and renovating the restaurant.

"I am pleased that the Government of Canada is able to assist this Aboriginal owned business in a way that will lead to greater stability and economic independence," said Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. "The expansion of this successful business venture will provide a strong base to fulfill economic development objectives of the Southeast Resource Development Council and to secure employment opportunities for its member communities."

"The expansion of the golf course will allow us to improve on an already excellent facility and to provide patrons with even better services and amenities," said Joe Malcolm, Executive Director of SERDC. "We are very proud of the commercial success we have acquired thus far and look forward to having the opportunity to continue to build on our achievements."

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada provided a \$37,500 contribution from the department's Resource Acquisition Initiative. Shawano-Wapunong provided \$37,500 cash equity as well as \$75,000 in commercial financing. Shawano-Wapunong Building Inc. is a development corporation of SERDC. SERDC was in-



corporated and recognized by the Government of Canada in 1978 and serves nine First Nations, all located in the southeastern portion of Manitoba: Berens River, Bloodvein, Brokenhead, Buffalo Point, Hallow Water, Little Black River, Pauingassi, Poplar River, and Little Grand Rapids.

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Powwows & Gatherings

Join the Powwow Trail

Powwow Season is winding down! Over the summer *Alberta Native News* has featured a schedule of some of the powwow events and other happenings.

Our list has been updated as the season progressed and we hope it helped you plan your journey along the powwow trail. Congratulations to all powwow participants, organizers and visitors.

August 24 - 26

- Okiijida Warrior Society Initiation Ceremony
Roseau Rapids Ojibway Nation, MB
(204) 427-2961

August 27 - 30

- Nekaneet International Healing Gathering
Maple Creek, SK (306) 662-3660

August 29 - September 3

- White Mountain Apache Tribe Fair and Rodeo
White River, Arizona, U.S.A. (520) 338-4346

August 31 - September 2

- Batchewana First Nation Powwow
Sault Ste. Marie, ON (705) 759-0915

August 31 - September 3

- Riel Beach Multi-Cultural Vocal Talent Search and Fishing Lake Mixed Slowpitch Tournament
Fishing Lake Metis Settlement (780) 473-7410

September 5 - 9

- Miss Indian Nations Pageant and Powwow
Bismark, North Dakota U.S.A. (701) 255-3285

September 14 - 16

- Prince Albert Metis Fall Festival
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (306) 922-1998



- Treaty 4 Traditional Powwow
Fort Qu'Appelle, SK (306) 832-8262

- Warrior Powwow
Neillsville, Wisconsin, U.S.A. (715) 743-4224

September 17 - 20

- B.C. Aboriginal Housing Symposium and Trade Show
Richmond, B.C. (877) 754-8876

September 21 - 23

- Council Tree Cultural Festival & Powwow
Delta, Colorado, U.S.A. 800-874-1741

September 26 - 27

- First Nations Agriculture and Food Conference
Kamloops, B.C. (888) 828-9751

November 3

- North Illinois University Traditional Powwow
DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A. (815) 753-0722

November 23 - 24

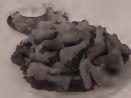
- Canadian Aboriginal Festival
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November 24 - 25

- Toronto International Powwow
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LEGEND

The little people is provided by the Lac La Ronge Band, Curriculum Resource Unit who are dedicated to providing quality educational resources to all the people of the First Nations.

The little people

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt;
told by George Charles (Thunder Cloud)

Long ago, a little girl named Niskisis lived with an Indian band camped close to a river up north. One evening her mother asked her to go to the river's edge to gather some dry firewood.



Niskisis took her time and watched the leaves and twigs floating on the current. Suddenly, she saw a tiny canoe about as long as her hand riding close to the river bank. It was paddled by a small man dressed in green.



Niskisis was very excited. She forgot her parent's warning not to bother any of these little people. It was thought that they had strong medicines of all kinds and if they were angered her luck would fall on her people. She waded out into the water, picked up the small canoe, and laughed at the little man.



The little man did not like being picked up out of the water. He was so angry that he would not speak to the young girl. Niskisis ran home and called to everyone about what she had found.



Her parents were shocked with Niskisis and felt frightened. "Go and put him back where you found him," they cried, "or else something awful will happen to one of us."



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Niskisis carried the little man back to the river. She realized that the little people might be very offended, and she whispered to the small man as she carried him, "If I have done you wrong, please forgive me and don't punish me or the people back at the camp. I meant you no harm, and I think your people are very fine canoe makers. Even your paddle shines from such fine carving."



She placed the little man and his canoe in the place where she had found him. For a moment she thought he would speak to her, but instead he paddled away without saying a word.



Summer passed quickly and the time when moose rut and fight for their mates arrived. It was September. One day Niskisis went with four young girls to gather berries by the river. They carried baskets slung from birch bark and walked on high ground along the river bank. They didn't have much luck because other berry pickers had already been there.

One of the girls said that the berries across the river were riper and bigger and that it was a pity they couldn't get across.

Niskisis said, "I wish that little man would come. It was around here someplace that I picked him out of the water."



Suddenly they heard a small voice saying, "Come over here and I'll take you and your friends to the other side of the river."

To their astonishment there was the little man with four friends, each in his own canoe. The little man told Niskisis and her friends to step into the small canoes.

Niskisis did so, but the other girls just laughed. They thought she would surely crush the little canoe when she stepped into it. However, as soon as her foot touched the canoe she became as small as the little man. Niskisis sat down and called to her friends to get into the other canoes.



The little people paddled the girls across the river. The moment Niskisis and her friends placed their feet on the ground, they grew to their normal size.



The girls thanked the little people and watched as they paddled out of sight around the curve of the river.

That evening the men from camp found the girls with overflowing berry baskets. They asked Niskisis and her friends how they had gotten across the river but the girls wouldn't say anything.

The girls had decided to keep their secret to themselves.



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The wedding

by Peter Cole

I come down from the reserve because my sister, Jessie, was getting married in the city. I was fourteen. Took the bus.

"Main depot. Thank you for travelling Greyhound."

My dress clothes all neat and ironed in the shiny leather suitcase grandfather gave me. Sure glad cousin Albert was there to meet me (cause I didn't know which way to go, what to do. There were millions of people, just like in Grande Prairie. Big buildings made out of mirrors, glass - all different colours. Cars everywhere, people driving crazy like Saturday night back home. I felt lonely. I didn't know anybody. I felt like I didn't fit in. Kinda scared. Then Albert showed up.

"Aw, this is nothing. Not even rush hour. C'mon, Jessie wants to see her baby brother. You sure grow fast. But skinny, whew! Like a willow."

Another bus. You put money in a box and the driver gives you a piece of paper with numbers on it. Everybody's sitting there looking straight ahead like they're made out of wax. Don't look too happy. I shoulda had a shower before I left home. Brushed my hair, maybe. I sat down next to this lady and you'd think I had lice or t.h. or something. "It's okay, lady. I'm cleaner than I look. I'm not white, but I'm clean."

Jessie looked real good. Pretty. Pregnant, too. She kissed me and hugged me like she hadn't seen me for ten years. Kept crying and laughing at the same time. I think she was high on something. Her eyes were glazed and she had a faraway look in her when she smiled. Good to see her. She asked about school. I told her I quit. "You should try to finish. You're smart. It's no good to end up on the street." I could see the bruises underneath her make-up. Native women get beat up a lot. Sometimes real bad.

"Who will give away the bride?" It seemed like a strange question to ask in public. But my uncle Johnnie stood up in his suit that was too tight and said he would. Boy, he's looking pretty rough since I last saw him. Like he's been in a whole bunch of fights. Benders.

Lots of wobbly people at the church. More kissing and crying and laughing. Most of the men looked real uncomfortable in their clothes, at least the ones that dressed up white.

My cousin, Allison Grey Cloud, gave me some punch and said it was virgin. I tasted it - it was spiked with rye. "No thanks, I don't like that stuff." She smiled, shrugged her shoulders, and said "Loosen up. You only get married once." I'd heard that one before, too.

When the reception began, people were already on the glow. I could smell it at

the wedding. Then after the church ceremony, some of them stopped at the bar or the vendors or both. "Just for a jug or two. A little refreshment. Just getting warmed up." Some of them were really flying from the band even started warming up.

By nine o'clock, a few of my relatives were having a hard time walking. Or even sitting up straight. Auntie Louise fell asleep, her head on the table, her hairdo all messed up in the spilled beer and pretzel crumbs. Kids were running around all over the place until about ten-thirty. Then they all seemed to fall asleep at once. The teenagers were mostly high on something: drugs, beer, hard stuff. Glue. Boy, can some of those guys dance! I never saw dancing like that at the reserve. But their eyes look dead and they don't talk right. Groggy.

"Hey, try some of this."

"No, thanks, I don't like the taste."

"Don't worry about the taste. Just drink it."

"I get to go check on Haze's kids. I promised."

Everybody who was drunk or stoned wanted everybody else to be like them, drunk or stoned. Out of it. Some of the old people get pretty high, too, but the Elders everyone respects, the real Elders - they kept away from the booze. Sat there and talked together and smoked. Drank tea.

I overheard them talking about suicide. Suicide. I thought about two of my cousins who shot themselves a while back, another got killed by a train. And Jeannie - she froze to death with her baby. Drunk. Passed out in a snowbank in high heels, fancy clothes. No suicide notes. Native people don't go in for notes like that. Not usually. They just do it. And it's over.

I thought about what happened back home over the last couple of years, all the violence and substance abuse. Some of the kids started hanging around together sniffing whatever they could find that would get them stoned. By the time they were my age they were wild all the time, crazy from sniffing glue and other stuff and smoking up, drinking. They drifted back and forth between the reserve and Edmonton. They started looking real wasted. Desperate. It was scary because they'd suddenly got violent for no reason.

"Good party, hey!" He offered me a joint.

"Don't do that. Thanks anyway." He didn't seem so friendly after I told him that. He called me an "uppy Indian", 'too reserved'. Then he laughed.

A couple fights broke out. Tables were knocked over. Jimmy Weasel Fat fell on the wedding cake and broke a chair. A lot of people laughed about that. Not everybody though.

"Good band, eh?" She was one of the only sober people my age. Pretty. Her eyes were like jewels. Her skin looked real good. "Wanna dance?" She showed me how to do some of the fancy dance numbers. It felt good to hold her. She smelled good. "So, how come you're sober?"

I told her about the reserve. About my parents. My friends. She told me about herself. "I'm Theresa Smallboy. We moved off the reserve before I was born." She said she lived in the bush out past Nordegg: in a tipi or a tent in the summer, Atco trailer in the winter. They have electric generators and satellite dishes. But no booze. No drugs. "If you're ever in trouble, anybody in the camp will help you. We all know what drinking does." Not too many dry bands - for sure.

There was lots of singing and dancing and falling over by the time the band started to wind down. People were passed out all over the place: in the hall, in the parking lot, in between.

It was like being on an island, sitting with Theresa. She grounded me, made me feel good about myself. I used to feel like I was a failure because I didn't want to drink or do drugs. I didn't fit in. It would be good to go to a powwow with her sometime.

It was getting real late and not too many people were in any shape for driving. Not that being drunk would stop them. Unless they couldn't find their keys or their car. There'd be accidents tonight. Some would wake up in jail. Or in the hospital. The ones who were already passed out might turn out to be the lucky ones. I thought about how I used to be - when I was younger.

I'd tried it all, starting when I was about eight years old: glue, Lysol, beer, whiskey, coal oil, hash, cocaine, gasoline, lighter fluid, nail polish remover. My older brothers got me started. You did it because everybody did it.

I almost died when I was twelve from drinking antifreeze and aftershave. I

Continued opposite



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The wedding, Continued from page 42

blackened out for a couple of days. I had a vision. I saw what I was doing to myself, what my people were doing. I cried until there weren't any tears left. I felt my heart break, like my spirit was trying to escape from my body, like my feelings were exploding inside me. It hurt a lot and the crying really helped me cope. It put me in touch with the great sadness inside me. The tears were like an anchor, something to hold onto in the storm.

Men aren't supposed to cry.

That's what I heard.

That was a bad time for me. It was the first time I tried to kill myself, the first time I ever thought about it. I had to get away from the pain. Get away from the person I had become. I looked in the mirror and didn't see anything - not even my own face. Nothing mattered. Nothing. It was all black.

That's when grandmother Waskaha took me to her place. She pulled me there in a wooden toboggan. She sang and burned sweetgrass and she drummed and gave me different kinds of tea. She talked to me in a language I didn't understand. It was kind of like Cree, but different.

She said "Life is sacred. You have to get in touch with your spirit. You've got your whole life to live. You have to heal yourself and then you can help other people. It's not good to cut yourself like that."

A lot of people at the reception had tried killing themselves. In one way or another. Theresa was like a breath of fresh air, like a message from the old ones that what I was doing was worthwhile. It's not easy being fourteen and having all your friends high all the time. There's a lot of pressure to be like them, to do what they do. Follow the leader. Theresa made me feel that being straight was all right. That it's okay to not be drunk or stoned. If it hadn't been for her, I might have fallen off the wagon at fourteen - maybe dead before my eighteenth birthday.

*Best wishes, Alberta Native News,
and congratulations on
your 17th Anniversary edition*

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"How are you getting home?"

"I was thinking of sleeping in the car. My ride's not going anywhere. I hid the keys and let the air out of one of the tires." She laughed and asked if she could stay in the car with me. "Sure, just don't make any fast moves. It makes me nervous." We both laughed, then we kissed and hugged for a while and fell asleep almost right away. Too bad. Theresa felt so good. I wanted to become a man that night. But it was too late and we were both too tired.

We shared one important thing that night besides our new friendship: we committed ourselves to staying sober. We wanted to do more than just survive another day. Another night.

We wrote letters back and forth. Talked on the phone. I moved to her camp that summer.

We spent a lot of time together taking long walks by the river and on the old trails and cutlines. I learned a lot from her about being part of the land. About belonging spiritually. We fished and hunted, canoed, picked berries and mushrooms, gathered all kinds of herbs and roots and bark. Sometimes her grandmother showed us how to make stuff. It was good to be there - with her for the summer and fall. Good to have a companion, somebody to talk to. Somebody my own age. We sang a lot and laughed. Got to a couple powwows.

Winter comes early up there in the hills. I had to go back north then. It was hard to leave, but I had to.

That was two years ago. Now we're both sixteen and still sober. Going to school in Hinton - working on our grade ten. Taking the bus every morning at six o'clock. Home by five. It's a long day but Theresa makes every minute count. And being sober together gives us the support we need. The encouragement to keep on. It's not easy. You have to work hard to make it work.

Oh, yeah. We got married last year. Not the white way with papers and all that Jesus Christ holy matrimony stuff and confetti and all that. We did it the traditional way back at the camp. We offered tobacco and burned sweetgrass and thanked the Creator for the world and for each other. We prayed for wisdom and understanding. We asked for a strong circle and for healthy children. Shouldn't be long now.

Happy Anniversary, Alberta Native News

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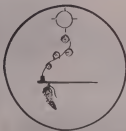
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